

Management consulting firm finds comprehensive IT with Lotus Foundations *Start*

Overview

■ **The Challenge**

Pair messaging environment with disaster recovery, remote access and other capabilities critical for small business success

■ **The Solution**

IBM® Lotus® Foundations™ Start software appliance, an all-in-one resource for messaging and collaboration, file management and backup and recovery tools for small businesses

■ **Benefits**

- *IT automation and ease of use help reduce external management costs by more than 25 percent*
- *Centralized, automated backups eliminate reliance on manual backups to external hard drive*
- *Remote file access and ability to view calendars and e-mail with cell phones allows staff to easily communicate when working onsite with customers*

**MURAK &
ASSOCIATES, LLC**

At New York's Murak and Associates, LLC, employees rarely have the comfort of working from the home office. The management consulting firm specializes in business improvement and turnaround performance strategies, so most hours are spent onsite at client headquarters. Despite its size, the small company works with customers around the world to develop and implement unique solutions that deliver tangible results—increased market share and profitability.

IBM Lotus Notes® and Lotus Domino® messaging and collaboration had long been a part of helping Murak and Associates employees stay connected. As the business grew, employees discovered that they desired additional IT capabilities for running their business while on the road. By integrating technologies like a firewall, VPN, Web server and file server with Lotus Notes and Domino messaging and collaboration capabilities, the company could more easily and securely access e-mail and project files from its customers' conference rooms.

Lotus Foundations *Start* offers affordable alternative to hardware upgrade

Murak and Associates turned to The PCA Group, its strategic IT partner, to meet a familiar challenge—upgrading technology without in-house expertise or an immense budget. Fortunately, Greg Gartland, technology specialist for The PCA Group, found an answer in IBM Lotus Foundations *Start*, a complete software appliance that provides the software essential for running a small or medium business. “Lotus Foundations *Start* offers the powerful messaging functionality of Lotus Notes and Domino along with additional capabilities that support telecommuting from client locations and a new level of backup and recovery,” he says. “Best of all, we could offer Murak and Associates a comprehensive, easy-to-use package specifically designed to meet the technology needs of small businesses.”

As the company moved forward with Lotus Foundations *Start*, Murak and Associates Founder and Principal Gerry Murak found the transition process transformative. “The conversion was seamless,” he says. “Easy access to the familiar Lotus Notes environment and cost-effective disaster recovery gave me total assurance that we made the right choice.”

Ease of use helps lower IT support costs

Easy management and a high level of IT automation built into Lotus Foundations *Start* enabled Murak and Associates to reduce the monthly costs associated with maintaining its environment. Lotus Foundations *Start* adjusts itself according to workload demands, anticipating and defending against security breaches and detecting, diagnosing and repairing potential issues. Remote administrator access also allows Gartland to maintain Lotus Foundations *Start* without even stepping into the office, saving The PCA Group time and lowering monthly IT maintenance costs for Murak and Associates. "I spend only around an hour a month on the Lotus Foundations *Start* environment at Murak and Associates," he says.

The easy-to-use Lotus Foundations *Start* management interface allowed Murak and Associates to move some IT tasks in-house, such as e-mail permissions or changes to the spam filter. "Non-technical staff can do things through the Lotus Foundations Web interface that I would never have had them do through a more complex administrator interface," adds Gartland.

Newfound reliability protects critical information

Businesses of all sizes need to reliably protect their data and ensure business can continue in case of disaster. With Lotus Foundations *Start*, Murak and Associates is protected with hourly automated, unattended backups, eliminating the company's reliance on nightly manual backups.

Users' machines now store information directly on the Lotus Foundations *Start* appliance instead of numerous local hard drives. Plus, backups can now be managed in-house. "Lotus Foundations offers features to small businesses that nobody else really has," says Gartland. "One hour or 15-minute incremental backups, system restores in eight minutes by clicking a single button on an LCD panel—you don't get that in any other system."

Lotus Notes and Domino support mobile workforce

Lotus Foundations *Start* features built-in Lotus Notes and Domino software for intelligent e-mail, calendaring and contact management, allowing Murak and Associates to continue using familiar tools as it reaches out to customers. Through an easy-to-use interface, e-mail can be signed and encrypted to help protect confidential data, and messages sent in error can be recalled if necessary. Comprehensive calendar management also allows employees to stay on top of constantly shifting client schedules whether they're in or out of the office.

Lotus Foundations *Start* also provides secure remote access to the company's files with file server and VPN capabilities. "Once I boot up my laptop, I can access information just as if I were in the office, or I can replicate calendar and mail to my cell phone and I'm set for the day," explains Murak. "Lotus Foundations *Start* helps me more easily work onsite with my customers."

Flexible systems grow with the business

Murak believes he now has a core set of tools that can adapt to meet the evolving needs of his business. "Lotus

Foundations *Start* will continue to give us all of the enterprise capabilities of Lotus Notes and Domino that we need in a small, easy-to-use package that also addresses our other IT needs," he says. "It's all there if and when we're ready for it."

For more information

For more information on IBM Lotus Foundations *Start*, please contact your IBM sales representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit www.lotusfoundations.com



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