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Director of IT

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Voit Real Estate Services Simplifies IT Management, Saves Time and Money

Industry

Commercial Real Estate Services

Location

Newport Beach, California
(Headquarters)

Challenges

Outdated on-premise email server, growing storage volumes (mailbox management), lack of an email archiving solution and the need for significant IT management time

Solution

LiveOffice Hosted Exchange 2007
LiveOffice Discovery Archive
LiveOffice Personal Archive

Results

Updated email service (hosted), new email archive with unlimited storage, drastically improved mailbox management and significantly reduced IT management time

Former Solution

On-premise Exchange 2003
(Enterprise Edition)
Barracuda Spam Firewall

Other Solutions Evaluated

On-premise Exchange 2007
On-premise Archiving Solution
POP3 Email Solution

Voit Real Estate Services is a robust, debt-free and privately owned operator of commercial real estate services throughout the western United States. In existence for almost 40 years through multiple market cycles, the organization has evolved into a full-service real estate company with expertise as a real estate owner, operator, asset manager, broker, property manager, contractor and developer. With all of these extensive capabilities, Voit is still able to retain a culture of a smaller boutique firm, which allows the company to quickly react to the demands of a changing marketplace while offering individualized and integrated real estate solutions across multiple sectors.

Voit’s in-depth experience is demonstrated in the 45-million square feet of property it has developed, managed and acquired, and \$32 billion in brokerage transactions over its history. With approximately 190 users and eight offices spread across California, Arizona and Nevada, reliable and hassle-free email and archiving solutions are imperative to keep its operations running smoothly.

Alleviating IT Management Headaches

Like most companies, Voit had to tighten its belt to weather the economic storm. Finding a solution that reduced overhead by eliminating server maintenance, added an easy-to-use archive solution, improved spam filtering and provided a disaster recovery plan was imperative. “LiveOffice helped us by taking away an expensive in-house IT product, but still giving us all the tools we had before and more,” said Jim Sillasen, director of IT. “Email is critical to our operations, and now it’s one less thing to worry about.”

With multiple office locations, it’s a challenge to manage various IT systems—especially email. Sillasen has to split his time between several locations, and not having an Exchange Server on premise has freed up significant time as well as money. He no longer has to worry about managing the email system, storage, backups or ongoing maintenance, which allows him to focus on other important business initiatives. “One of the nice things about a hosted solution is not having to deal with a lot of time-consuming tasks,” said Sillasen. “The LiveOffice solutions have freed up 25 percent of our IT department’s time.”

Improving Mailbox Management

Offloading the email management burden to LiveOffice has had a significant impact on Voit. “Our Hosted Exchange service is going really well,” said Sillasen. “It’s reliable and has good performance. Exchange itself is always operating great.”

Implementing an Archiving Solution

The company’s main reason for archiving was mailbox management. End users were constantly hitting mailbox storage limits and creating .pst files locally, which is very problematic. “LiveOffice archiving has been a major improvement for end users,” said Sillasen. “Our 2 GB mailbox limit is not a problem – if they hit the limit, they can just delete if they need to, since they can find whatever they need in the archive. It’s fantastic for finding things.”

Empowering End Users

End users are seeing the benefits of LiveOffice Personal Archive. “Everyone who has used it likes it,” said Sillasen. “After a little in-house training, they can usually track an email down pretty quickly.”

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Director of IT

Sillasen recalls two stellar examples: “One user lost his inbox for an entire week and was able to retrieve it in Personal Archive. Another user wiped out his entire sent folder, but it was no problem—I told him to check in the archive and he was able to restore everything.”

Help desk requests have been significantly reduced as well. Sillasen used to get a lot of requests to determine whether or not emails were successfully sent. Now he can just refer users to the archive. “If it’s there, it’s been sent.”

Preparing for E-Discovery Requests

Although e-discovery was not a major deciding factor in implementing an email archiving solution, it helped Voit’s management team see the value of an archiving solution. And it has since proven to be a valuable addition to their suite of services. “Compliance is an added boon for us,” said Sillasen. “Discovery Archive is one of the greatest things about our switch to LiveOffice. Management asked me to monitor some emails for inappropriate content, and I was able to quickly and easily pull the emails up and create a .pst of the search. It works really well.”

Finding the Best Service Provider: On-premise vs. SaaS

Voit Real Estate Services explored both on-premise and software-as-a-service (SaaS) options to upgrade its email system. “We considered on-premise Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 and an internal archive, but the cost was so prohibitive at the time, we didn’t want to do it for that reason alone,” recalls Sillasen. “Microsoft had a licensing change and no longer offered free Outlook. We’d have to pay for Exchange, Outlook, CALs [client access licenses], secondary storage and more. The implementation would have been well over \$100,000, so we had to look at hosted options instead.”

After conducting a lot of research, Sillasen found that many sources were speaking of SaaS as a viable solution for companies. Price, convenience, reliability and an archiving solution with a simple interface were key requirements in the decision-making process. “We were worried about the reliability of SaaS services before signing up with LiveOffice, but after a few initial hiccups, the service has been very stable.”

The Path to LiveOffice

Online research led Sillasen to LiveOffice. “LiveOffice was highly recommended by various review sites,” said Sillasen. “It is one of the largest providers, and its reliability is really good.”

What stood out most for Sillasen? “The value for the price and amount of services you receive, including unlimited storage space for the archive,” he says. “LiveOffice is pretty much our first big hosted solution, and management has seen the benefits of SaaS. Other departments are now switching to hosted models and can now work more efficiently. LiveOffice was the catalyst.”

Migrating Data to LiveOffice

While some SaaS solutions make migrating legacy data challenging, if not impossible, LiveOffice’s CloudMerge tool makes it simple and seamless. “We migrated our existing Exchange Server database, which was about 300 GB,” said Sillasen. “It was a smooth process. The LiveOffice tech team gave great tools and instructions. It was easy to get the data off our systems and onto hard drives, and LiveOffice brought it all into our new Hosted Exchange and archiving systems.”

When asked if he’d recommend LiveOffice archiving, Sillasen said, “I already have! I’ve personally encouraged several employees who have left the firm to get their own personal LiveOffice accounts, and they are quite happy.”



For More Information

Contact our email experts and learn how we can help you meet your archiving, compliance and discovery goals.

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