IPM

THE AGNOSTIC DESKTOP

TECHNOLOGY OVERHAUL SUPPORTS WORK/LIFE BALANCE AT US-BASED LAW FIRM.

IThere is a fundamental shift afoot in the legal industry. Many attorneys are foregoing the once lucrative yet arduous path to partnership in exchange for work/life balance and flexibility. Loyalty to one firm is no longer a work ethic, but rather a choice and many attorneys are choosing to make lateral moves in their pursuit for happiness and re-defined success. There is an entire generation of attorneys who want something different from both their legal careers and their law firms – and this mass only continues to grow each year.

According to a recent Legal Week survey, today's attorneys seek more intrinsic affirmation, with their top two wants being employee appreciation and better treatment by partners, followed by teamwork and cooperation. Respondents' desire for competitive salaries tied with quality of work and work/life balance. If attorneys are no longer satisfied with the status quo, how will this impact the structure and policies that once governed law firms? Is it possible to still uphold work excellence and achieve billable hour minimums in a flexible working environment?

In late 2011, one of IPM's legal industry clients, a U.S.-headquartered business and financial services law firm decided it was time to upgrade its aging infrastructure, which included migrating to Microsoft Windows 7 and Office 2010, upgrading its Exchange 2003 servers to Exchange 2010 and completing a host of other software and hardware updates. The firm had exhausted and outgrown its current IT capabilities and needed a more robust and flexible solution to accommodate the new age computing needs of its staff, attorneys and partners.

Given the operational limitations of the previous infrastructure and the growing internal demands to support Bring-Your-Own-Device (BYOD) and work/life balance, the firm worked with IPM to design an IT business strategy to orchestrate an agnostic platform as part of this infrastructure overhaul. In addition to internal drivers, tropical storm Irene had just swept through New York temporarily closing down the firm, which further underscored the need for a remote access preparedness plan.

EMPLOYEE *'WANTS'* INSPIRE IT VISION

For five years, staff and attorneys learned to 'get creative' and 'work around' their outdated and limiting infrastructure, which included Microsoft Windows XP and Office 2003, Microsoft 2003 Exchange server and aged backend business applications including Open Text eDocs version 4 and Citrix XenApp 4. They came up with alternative methods to complete tasks that their existing infrastructure could not support. They knew how long certain tasks would

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take to complete based on system performance and they would plan their day around these tasks to ensure deadlines were met. The firm also did not have an infrastructure in place to support the latest technologies, such as iPads or smart phones, so attorneys had no choice but to use company-issued, bulky laptops for work and use their own preferred tools at home.

Instead of technology helping the law firm be more productive and efficient, it was the associates who had to compensate for the technology's shortcomings. As a result, the firm experienced a gradual loss of competiveness, increased employee frustrations, billable hour losses and case delays. Technology became an impediment instead of an advantage.

In 2009, the firm hired a new Executive Director that had the vision and experience leveraging IT to overcome business challenges and improve operations. While his initial mission was to update the under-performing system and shepherd a Windows 7 migration, his vision challenged partners to think about the future based upon the needs and wants of the firm's staff and attorneys. With the help of IPM, he demonstrated the business potential and operational advantages of a computing environment that would allow attorneys to work from anywhere, on any kind of device and securely access firm applications and data as needed – in short, an agnostic desktop.

During the time the firm was discussing the project and its ambitious vision, tropical storm Irene hit New York. Located in the heart of the financial district near the water, the firm was forced to shut down for a period of time. Daily operations were put on hiatus, temporarily affecting the progress of client cases and rapidly depleting billable hour profits. This unforeseen disaster further fueled the firm's interest to create a reliable remote access strategy to keep 'operations up' during natural disasters or unplanned occurrences.

IT OVERHAUL IS THE CATALYST FOR CHANGE

During an eight-month effort, IPM consultants partnered with the firm's IT department to create a multi-phase, integrated program that overhauled its IT infrastructure and incorporated applications and protocols to accomplish the firm's goal of an agnostic desktop.

In the initial phase, efforts were centered on migrating from Windows XP and Office 2003 to Microsoft Windows 7 and Office 2010. In addition to better performance and added functionality, this migration established the underlying infrastructure needed to properly run and manage critical business applications and necessary server and desktop virtualization solutions to support the firm's agnostic desktop. Additionally, the firm upgraded to Microsoft Exchange 2010 which allowed for improved replication between servers, native archiving and easier calendar sharing between users to improve collaboration. The decision to migrate came at a critical time since Microsoft announced that older versions of Windows, such as XP and Vista, would no longer be supported with the release of Office 2013.

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Once Windows 7 was implemented, the OpenText DM system upgrade and implementation of Citrix XenDesktop and XenApp were the next crucial steps. During this phase, IPM worked with the firm to implement an Early Adopter Program, a group of on-staff beta testers ranging from operations staff to partner who would be willing to test-drive the upgrades (including new applications, system capabilities and functionalities) and provide real-time feedback to ensure solid deployments to the company's 180+ staff and attorneys.

With Citrix XenDesktop and XenApp, the firm put in place a desktop virtualization solution and application delivery system that transformed their Windows desktops and applications into an on-demand service available to any user, anywhere and on any device. The firm was able to securely deliver individual Windows, web and SaaS applications and even full virtual desktops to PCs, Macs, iPads, tablets, smart phones, laptops and thin clients — all with a high-definition user experience.

This set up also gave the firm remote access directly to the user's PC. It delivered the granular application-level control legal administrators require while empowering users with remote access from anywhere. This final component delivered the business continuity assurance the firm sought after tropical storm Irene.

FLEXIBLE WORKING FOR TODAY'S ATTORNEYS

Technology had long been an impediment at this firm, burdening staff and attorneys alike with its inefficiencies and shortcomings. Once completed, this technology overhaul opened the door to a new way of communicating, collaborating and working. It delivered the tools and capabilities to introduce a myriad of new flex programs that helped create a more employee-centric working environment.

Top-level programs introduced since this initiative.

- Staff (including operations, associates and legal counsel) can participate in the firm's BYOD program, which allows participants unrestricted device choice.

- Associates can take advantage of a work/life balance schedule that allows them to leverage the new system to work remotely yet access necessary applications anytime, anywhere.

- In addition to the initiatives this upgrade afforded its employees, the firm has also experienced significant benefits. Some of the more notable benefits to date include:

- Citrix XenApp reduced the cost of desktop management up to 50 percent by simplifying the management and delivery of all Windows applications.

- With Citrix XenDesktop, IT can now deliver every type of virtual desktop—from simple and standardized, to high-performance and personalized—using a single solution specifically tailored to meet the performance, security and flexibility

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requirements of each user.

- The Windows 7 migration provided a more robust operating environment that increased productivity, decreased processing delays and enabled the firm to enhance its suite of business applications to further improve its offerings.

CONCLUSION

Consumer communication technologies have changed the way the world conducts business. Smart phones, iPads, tablets and laptops are only a few of the many tools business professionals regularly use, yet only a fraction of businesses today are equipped with the infrastructure to properly support these technologies and make them productive tools in the workplace.

This reality puts legal firms at a crossroads as a new generation of tech-savvy attorneys emerge, pushing firms to think, act and court them differently. To remain competitive and create an appealing environment for today's modern lawyer, firms need to see technology as a business strategy rather than a tool. They need to be willing to change old habits or risk being left behind.

ABOUT IPM

For more than 30 years, IPM has been the IT force behind some of New York Metro's most prestigious brands. Backed through partnerships with technology leaders including Microsoft, Citrix, EMC, VMware and more, IPM offers professional services, product sourcing, integrated service management and IT staffing with an unmatched engagement experience - from concept to execution. Learn more at www.ipm.com.

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