

CASE STUDY



US Air Force/Air Force Material Command (AFMC)

Server consolidation and email upgrade for 140,000 users

The Organization

AFMC, headquartered at Wright-Patterson AFB and supported by 10 host bases and several associate units at other military bases, is tasked with the equipping of the US Air Force with weapon systems. They are responsible for the entire process from research and development through and including retirement of the systems.

The Challenge:

Email is the backbone of any organizations' infrastructure and the AFMC is no exception. They were restricted by their existing email system not only in mailbox size but also in resources for mailbox management so the decision was made to implement a server consolidation initiative.

The project would simplify network complexity by significantly reducing the number of devices on the network which would reduce configuration management challenges and also cut down on potential points of failure.

Migrating 140,000 users from Microsoft Exchange Server 5.5 to Exchange Server 2003 would eliminate mailbox limits (at least conceptually), reduce the number of host servers from 400 to 140, and consolidate support operations for their 19 locations nationwide down to four regional sites. Consolidating their technology would facilitate better access to shared data by employing common storage for diverse servers such as common user files, e-mail, and functional applications. Also, archiving data, retrieving data and effective electronic record management would be greatly simplified and less expensive in a centralized storage environment.

AFMC concluded that server consolidation provides specific, measurable benefits, namely lower administrative costs created by reduced system complexity. They would now have decreased system downtime by having a more flexible physical design, with a major benefit being their ability to rapidly deploy new applications, another cost saving.

With such an enormous undertaking that would last almost 3 years, AFMC realized that for the project to be a success and to ensure a solid return on their investment, acceptance by the 140,000 email users being impacted became essential and communicating the scope and breadth of the plan and how the users would be affected became key.

Nevada's Answer:

Working closely with the project manager, Fred Altum, the Nevada Account Executive provided a solution that not only helped communicate the server consolidation project but also helped users understand the new features of Outlook. Because AFMC was an early adopter of MS Outlook, they did not require a standard Outlook quick reference guide; they wanted a custom solution that addressed how to use Outlook in the AFMC environment. Also because AFMC was concerned that more than half of their users worked remotely at some point, NLS designed a mobility guide that combined BlackBerry information with Outlook Web Access instructions.

Nevada delivered two user guides for the AFMC project for only a few dollars per user which was an extremely small investment that would help ensure success of their project – a project that cost millions of dollars.

