

Growing Small Business Together

Case Study



Info et Cetera Consulting

Worcester, MA based Info et Cetera Consulting provides IT infrastructure and custom technology solutions that solve strategic business issues and improve a firm's productivity, costs, and revenue opportunities. Info et Cetera's IT support and system implementation centers on using Microsoft's Small Business Server as the foundation for a productive infrastructure. With a deep knowledge of business systems and how companies, customers, partners, and employees interact, Info et Cetera also builds customized software solutions that provide significant improvements to processes, communication, and transactions.




Passports, Inc.

Passports provides educational travel tours for high school and college students, their teachers and professors, and adults. Travel trips are scheduled year-round to Europe, Scandinavia, Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and Australia at low, guaranteed prices, and are normally accompanied by local teacher-organizers.

The people behind Passports have been responsible, directly or indirectly, for the successful overseas travel of hundreds of thousands of American high school students since the mid-nineteen-sixties. The fundamental premise has remained unchanged over all these years: travel to foreign lands is an education in itself, making the world a safer place, and making people happier with their lives than they would have been otherwise.



The Challenge

Essentially, Passports, Inc. needed to upgrade their email system, improve their network security, access, and performance, and be able to monitor and control employee internet access and usage for their 50 PC environment.

Passports, Inc was running Merak mail software on their web server, which was greatly limited in terms of extended productivity offerings such as calendars, contact management, and general email management. Merak also required regular and extensive administrator intervention to maintain smooth operation. Passports wanted a more integrated email system that would lower their administrative overhead, while also easing the amount of workstation administration necessary to set up and standardize user email settings and centralizing the storage of users' email content.

Passports, Inc. also wanted to be able to manage outgoing Internet traffic to have greater control over which employees could access the Internet and which sites they could visit. Passports also desired a way to gather extensive reports on how employees were using the Internet.

In short Passports, Inc needed solutions to improve their business practices and ability to communicate with employees, travel partners around the world, teachers, and students.



Microsoft Small Business Server 2003 has changed the way we work together and has really improved our productivity. I feel very strongly about the value this product provides our company.

Dave Markle
Passports, Inc.



The Approach

Based on its previous experience with similar business issues, Info et Cetera was the perfect choice as Passports' technology partner. Info et Cetera was able to put together a powerful solution based on Microsoft technology that solved their issues and was quick to implement.

Info et Cetera implemented a new server running Windows Small Business Server 2003 Premium Edition R2. In addition, Passports' mail was moved from their web server to Exchange Server, running inside SBS. Employee email was configured for Outlook Web Access to provide remote email access to users. Several remote employees email access was set for secure internet, providing them a means of using the full rich Outlook 2003 program while still having their data stored centrally on the server. For several users, Info et Cetera configured email access via cell phones, specifically the Motorola Q running Windows Mobile 5 Smartphone Edition, and operating on the Verizon Wireless network. Info et Cetera also replaced Passports' simple router with Microsoft's Internet Security and Acceleration Server (ISA Server 2004), that comes with SBS Premium Edition. ISA Server allowed Passports to configure groups with varying degrees of permissions for Internet access. Info et Cetera then trained Passports how to use the reporting features built in to ISA Server to mine information related to employee Internet usage.

“With Small Business Server, we are able to provide a very high value proposition to our customers. Everything that a business needs for a productive, stable, and secure environment is integrated into this product. We are very happy to be able to help companies like Passports, Inc.

John Pattison
Info et Cetera

Microsoft Solutions Used

- Windows® Small Business Server 2003 R2 Premium Edition
- Microsoft® Outlook 2003
- Microsoft Internet Security and Acceleration Server 2004
- Windows Mobile® 5.0

The Benefit

Since implementing the changes, at least 8 hours per month of email and network administration work has been eliminated. Appointment scheduling via Microsoft Outlook has eliminated paper and verbal meeting notices. Executives are now reachable via email at all times, increasing communication between employees and the executive team. On-call travel support representatives use Windows Mobile devices to monitor email support requests, and are also able to access customer information via a web-based portal optimized for Internet Explorer running on Windows Mobile. Inappropriate Internet usage has been virtually eliminated, increasing employee productivity. Network security has been increased via ISA Server as approximately 5 distinct network attacks per day are specifically identified and blocked by ISA Server.

The bottom line is communication with employees, customers, and partners is dramatically better; the network functions more smoothly and is safe from outside attacks and viruses; and monthly administrative costs and time have been significantly lowered.

For more information on Info et Cetera visit www.infoetc.com or call (508) 635-9511.

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