

TECHNOLOGY DELIVERS BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY GAINS



Founded in 1980, Duns Limited is a professional team of business consultants and chartered accountants based in Christchurch, New Zealand. The company offers complete financial, accountancy and business advisory services to a wide range of businesses, organisations and individual clientele.

Duns provide a range of specialist services ideally suited to meet the challenges of today's changing business and personal environment. They perform a full range of professional audit and review engagement services, providing added value by assessing business risks, and advising where appropriate, to enhance management processes and strategy.

To deliver on this broad range of services Duns has been working with Datasouth, its technology partner since early 2006, to implement new technologies across the network platform to provide an agile working environment and significant gains in business productivity.

Datasouth is an Information Technology Partner to innovative and leading businesses throughout New Zealand and Australia.

We understand Business Intelligence, Software Development, Network Infrastructure and total System Design and Support.

Through working with Datasouth, you are employing an Information Technology partner substantial enough to undertake any technology engagement.

We appreciate that the partnership with our clients is what matters, and realising the potential of this relationship enables us to understand your requirements to deliver effective business outcomes.

WITH THE CHANGES TO THE NETWORK CORE, OUR STAFF ARE NOW ABLE TO PERFORM THE TASKS AT HAND WITH GREATER EFFICIENCIES

Using technology to support business objectives

When Duns first engaged Datasouth, the core infrastructure was supported on an ad-hoc basis with a staff member supporting the PC environment on a daily basis. With additional staff numbers required to support the growing business and services, Duns identified that the current network core was not able to meet the desired requirements of a busy office.

Ian Jefferis a Director of Duns comments – *“The Network had no central control and had a lack of IT policies around our data security, backup, and PC images. PC’s were a mixture of brands which over the past years had been largely upgraded using bits and pieces. The overall health of our servers and computers was unknown due to a lack of tools and resources. As the workload increased, so too did our employee downtime - our staff member responsible for the overview of our IT had become involved daily, spending most of the time fixing all the little issues rather than focussing on being an accountant.”*

To assist Duns, Datasouth proposed a number of changes to the network infrastructure to help automate and provide a stable core infrastructure, allowing Duns to add staff numbers and increase business productivity. The network file servers were consolidated to ease management and lower total costs, and Microsoft Exchange Server was deployed to provide e-mail management, shared calendars and contact management. In addition an accounting practice software management application was integrated into Exchange to file and tag client correspondence emails into the appropriate storage areas for easy cross referencing.

Servers have been installed with Management Software for health and performance reporting. This provides a complete overview of the network performance, capacity and user activity. Network resources can be better managed as system utilisation and data files continue to grow and email mail boxes can be trimmed down thanks to email archiving. Email archiving also provides retention policy controls and the ability to meet the required compliance around email filing.

All new desktop devices are deployed with a standard operating image based on Windows Vista and required business applications such as Microsoft Office 2007. System integrity is maintained by the centralised management of security and antivirus updates. Security updates for the desktop and network core environment are reviewed by the network administrator and deployed automatically across the network on approval. In addition all virus signature updates are automatically retrieved by the antivirus server and deployed to network devices when they check in. The security of the network is maintained by both a managed firewall solution at the network perimeter and by the deployment of a host based firewall on each of the desktop clients. This provides a fully managed and robust security solution that is able to be easily maintained from a central console.

Backup processes are fully automated across all servers for complete data protection and ease of restore in the event of a basic file deletion or total coverage in the event of a serious disaster.

Technology supports business agility

As part of the company culture of offering flexible working conditions, remote access has become an important business mechanism in attracting and retaining staff. The delivery of an appropriately secured remote access solution is allowing employees to run applications as though they are in the city office - the user experience being the same as sitting at their local PC.

Members of staff with young children are able to balance the home/work lifestyle and can access network resources as required. The provisioning of remote access has also proved useful for employees living outside the CBD, providing opportunities to reduce their travel costs into the office especially in the current environment of rising fuel costs.

“With the changes to the network core, our staff are now able to perform the tasks at hand with greater efficiencies. The availability of our PC’s and network has increased allowing our client service levels to also increase, resulting in a greater return on our investment” – Ian Jefferis, Director.

Transforming business processes

With a robust and optimised network infrastructure in place, Duns are now considering the implementation of business process efficiencies including content management and unified communications. The implementation of such efficiencies will continue to transform the business, providing operational advantages in collaboration and communication across all parts of the business, and thus further enhancing Duns client service delivery.

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