Messageware

Extra Space Storage Takes OWA Security and Productivity To the Next Level with Messageware's Outlook Web Access Suite

ExtraSpace Storage, Inc.

www.extraspace.com

Industry:

Storage

Challenge:

Make Outlook Web Access suitable for Storage Company's move to Exchange 2007 at its nearly 700 retail locations

Products:

Messageware OWA Suite 2009

Key Benefits:

• Users gain signoff security
• Address completion
• Spell check
• Calendar printing
• Other OWA productivity enhancements

SITUATION

Self-storage is big business—and not only because Americans are drowning in "stuff". As thousands of entrepreneurial landowners, developers and investors have discovered, self-storage properties are strong business opportunities. Their favorable ROI has prompted the building of over 55,000 facilities across the U.S., at last count.

Extra Space Storage® has risen to the number two position in this growing industry through its powerful Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) based business formula. The company owns, co-owns, or manages 695 storage locations in 35 states, all under the Extra Space Storage brand.

As noted by Karl Wenger, director of network services for Extra Space, such a diverse business model presents unique IT challenges. "Because growth in this industry comes through both acquisition and local development, it's easy for companies to develop islands of data around the country," he said. "Extra Space's solution has been to create a Web-based IT infrastructure that eliminates these islands, while maintaining centralized software provisioning and control."

The Extra Space IT team, headed by CIO Bill Hoban, has built an innovative online computing environment that supports virtually everything an Extra Space location needs to operate. There are one to three computers at each retail location on which users access a third-party ASP model containing Point-Of-Sale (POS), facility management and other business software via the Web. The list also includes Outlook Web Access (OWA), which lets facility managers and employees send and receive email, maintain calendars and contact lists, and manage tasks via Windows Internet Explorer.

Extra Space's choice of OWA, however, was incomplete. "Our local personnel didn't have some of the productivity features Microsoft Outlook offers. A big one was address book auto-addressing. In order to send an email they had to perform a search for the person's email address, which was very time-consuming. There was no spell-check or easy way to attach documents either," Wenger stated.

SOLUTION

In 2003, Extra Space purchased Messageware's Plus Pack for Exchange 2000. This gave its corporate and district manager's basic productivity enhancements for Outlook Express while travelling. When Extra Space acquired Storage USA in 2005, they soon realized Exchange 2000 was not sufficient to handle an additional 400 facilities and hundreds of new employees, and they upgraded their email system to Exchange 2003. They turned to Messageware OWA Suite 2003 to help bridge the gap.

The company's positive experience with OWA Suite 2003 has led Wenger back to Messageware again, having just upgraded to Exchange 2007. "After reviewing OWA Suite 2009, we realized it would satisfy all our needs for OWA. In addition to the enhanced address book functionally, the security features had previously prompted us to upgrade from Plus Pack to the Suite, and we wanted and needed those features again in Exchange

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2007," said Wenger. "Its ability to sign out the user automatically was perhaps the biggest single reason we selected the product."

Messageware's OWA Suite 2009 enhances Microsoft's Exchange 2007 email server with a host of productivity and security upgrades. From auto logout and Outlook-style addressing to attachment security and easy calendar printing, OWA Suite 2009 provides virtually all the Outlook Web Access features businesses seek most.

Soon after installing OWA Suite 2009, Extra Space discovered a compatibility issue between the application and the facility management software the company uses—but as Wenger reported; Messageware's developers were more than up to the task. "There was a bit of overwriting going on between OWA and the software, but Messageware fixed it within a week or so. The issue was handled wonderfully and in a very short timeframe," he said.

RESULTS

With OWA Suite 2009 in place, Wenger believes his company has the complete, practical and reliable Web-based computing environment it was looking for. "OWA Suite 2009 makes OWA spectacular," he stated. "Now our facility personnel can go to any PC at their location and immediately begin working."

The "virtual office" created through the IT department's online platform also enables corporate personnel, senior site managers, and learning specialists, to function independently of facility employees, simply by logging in separately. Also happy are Extra Space Storage's outside accounting firms, as the email solution satisfies all Sarbanes Oxley security requirements.

"We've had a long relationship with Messageware, a partnership that has evolved as our organization has grown," Wenger said. "As a public company, we take security and user productivity seriously. OWA Suite 2009 helps us achieve both."

ABOUT MESSAGEWARE

Founded in 1993, Messageware develops and markets solutions that enhance and secure Outlook Web Access. A trusted Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and a Global Exchange ISV for 15 years, our applications give companies of all sizes the ability to enhance, secure, and customize OWA.

Messageware solutions give organizations a greater return on their Microsoft Exchange investment through increased employee productivity and reduced support and IT administration costs. Messageware products are used by over 2,500 enterprises and four million users worldwide, from Fortune 500 companies to small businesses, in every industry including banking, education, financial services, government, healthcare and legal services.