Objects have descriptive characteristics called *properties* or *attributes.* You can call up the properties of an object by double-clicking the object in the management console.

Domains

A *domain* is the basic unit for grouping related objects in Active Directory. Typically, domains correspond to departments in a company. A company with separate Accounting, Manufacturing, and Sales departments might have domains named (you guessed it) `Accounting`, `Manufacturing`, and `Sales`. Or the domains may correspond to geographical locations. A company with offices in Detroit, Dallas, and Denver might have domains named `det`, `dal`, and `den`.

Note that because Active Directory domains use DNS naming conventions, you can create subdomains that are considered to be child domains. You should always create the top-level domain for your entire network before you create any other domain. If your company is named Nimbus Brooms, and you've registered `nimbusbroom.com` as your domain name, you should create a top-level domain named `nimbusbroom.com` before you create any other domains. Then you can create subdomains such as `accounting.nimbusbroom.com`, `manufacturing.nimbusbroom.com`, and `sales.nimbusbroom.com`.

Every domain must have at least one *domain controller,* which is a server that's responsible for the domain. Although one domain controller is the minimum, it's best to provide at least two domain controllers within your domain. That way, if one fails, Active Directory will continue working for the domain. Active Directory uses a feature called *replication* to keep all the domain controllers in sync.

Organizational units

Many domains have too many objects to manage together in a single group. Fortunately, Active Directory lets you create one or more *organizational units,* also known as OUs. OUs let you organize objects within a domain, without the extra work and inefficiency of creating additional domains. (In this respect, an OU is similar to a folder in the file system.)

One reason to create OUs within a domain is to assign administrative rights to each OU of different users. Then these users can perform routine administrative tasks such as creating new user accounts or resetting passwords.

Suppose that the domain for the Denver office, named `den`, houses the Accounting and Legal departments. Rather than create separate domains for these departments, you could create organizational units for the departments.