



Regional Winery Reduces User Complaints By 80 Percent, Increases Efficiency

Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Food & Beverage

Customer Profile

J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines is a Northern California-based producer and distributor of fine wines. Its products are currently sold throughout the United States and 25 countries worldwide.

Business Situation

The company found it difficult to manage its complex IT infrastructure. It also needed a more reliable e-mail network for its mobile sales force.

Solution

J. Lohr deployed a solution based on Microsoft® Windows Server™ 2003 and Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 that standardizes its network operating system and features a portal that consolidates local applications, file shares, and Web sites into one central location.

Benefits

- Increased reliability
- Better remote access
- Increased efficiency
- Improved collaboration
- Improved communication

“We used to get e-mail ‘send and receive error’ messages nonstop, every day. Since we deployed this solution, that problem has gone away.”

Debbie Sadler, IT Manager, J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines

J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines, a 100-person company headquartered in San Jose, California, produces and distributes fine wines throughout the United States and 25 countries worldwide. The company’s IT infrastructure, which features a variety of servers and computers, was complex and unreliable. In addition, the company’s e-mail network was unstable, which presented problems for members of a mobile sales force that relied on e-mail to do their jobs. To fix these issues, J. Lohr hired ZAG Technical Services to deploy a solution based on Microsoft® Windows Server™ 2003 and Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 that features a standardized system and remote e-mail access capabilities. As a result, J. Lohr has increased its IT system reliability, provided its mobile sales force with better access to information, increased efficiency, and improved employee collaboration and communication.



“The salespeople can now get information immediately while they’re in the field. For example, if they need to get pricing and availability for our wines, they can get it right away. That wasn’t possible before.”

Debbie Sadler, IT Manager, J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines

Situation

J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines, a regional winery headquartered in San Jose, California, was trying to manage a complex IT infrastructure that included Novell and Macintosh servers for file system access, as well as Macintosh personal computers. As a result, the company’s 100 employees had to go to multiple locations on the network to access the information they needed to perform their jobs.

An even bigger problem was the instability of the e-mail network, which was hurting business productivity. Interoffice and intraoffice messaging was being handled with a POP3 mail service running on one of the unstable Macintosh servers. Sending and receiving e-mail was a constant battle for employees. “Our salespeople would always be calling from sales visits to tell me they hadn’t received an important e-mail message we had sent them,” says Debbie Sadler, IT Manager at J. Lohr. “Many of our users were even relying on their own personal e-mail accounts to do business, which was hurting us from a brand standpoint.”

J. Lohr employees also had no method of sharing calendars, which was a feature they needed to better communicate and collaborate with one another and with customers.

Solution

To solve these problems, J. Lohr turned to ZAG Technical Services Inc., a Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner that provides IT services to customers in the western United States. J. Lohr chose ZAG to assist with a companywide systems consolidation and standardization project. After recommending that J. Lohr standardize on a single network operating system, ZAG deployed a solution that uses the Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 operating system, the foundation of Microsoft Windows Server System™

integrated server software, as the standard operating system for the environment. ZAG deployed Windows Server 2003 to migrate off of the Novell and Macintosh servers. Permissions for file access were reviewed and restructured to provide easier and more-secure access.

ZAG also recommended adding collaboration capabilities to the J. Lohr e-mail environment. To accomplish that, ZAG deployed Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 communication and collaboration server, which is part of Windows Server System, to help provide a full-featured messaging and collaboration environment, and to replace the POP3 service.

ZAG also designed a remote-access strategy to allow the J. Lohr mobile sales force to have anytime, anywhere access to company information. As part of that strategy, ZAG deployed the Citrix Access Suite, which includes Presentation Server, MetaFrame Secure Access Manager (MSAM), and Password Manager. MSAM gives users a central place to access data and provides a portal-like solution that consolidates local applications, local file shares, Internet-based applications, and publicly available Web sites into one central location.

In addition, ZAG standardized J. Lohr user computers by installing the Microsoft Windows® XP Professional operating system and Microsoft Office Standard Edition 2003. ZAG also deployed Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000, part of Windows Server System, to support a number of database applications.

Benefits

With its new IT infrastructure and remote e-mail access capabilities, J. Lohr has increased system reliability, provided its mobile sales force with better access to information, increased efficiency, and improved collaboration and communication.

Increased Reliability

The ZAG solution has provided J. Lohr with an IT infrastructure that can be relied upon to deliver information in a reliable and easy-to-use manner. As a result, complaints about e-mail have been reduced by 80 percent. "Our e-mail system is completely reliable now," says Sadler. "The difference is amazing. We used to get e-mail 'send and receive error' messages nonstop, every day. Since we deployed this solution, that problem has gone away." Because users are more satisfied with the network, administration is easier and less time-consuming.

Better Remote Access

The J. Lohr mobile sales force now has anytime, anywhere access to important e-mail documents and other information through Microsoft Office Outlook® Web Access. "The salespeople can now get information immediately while they're in the field," says Sadler. "For example, if they need to get pricing and availability for our wines, they can get it right away. That wasn't possible before."

Increased Efficiency

The ZAG solution has increased efficiency and productivity at J. Lohr. IT support calls, for example, have decreased by 80 percent, while mailing costs have gone down by 20 percent. Overall productivity has increased 10 percent. The solution also gives J. Lohr employees a single location to find the information they need to do their jobs. "Having everything on one server has streamlined everything for us and made processes easier," says Sadler. "And because e-mail is backed up centrally instead of being stored on remote laptops, it is more secure and can be recovered if necessary. As a result, we can be more efficient in everything we do."

Improved Collaboration, Communication

Employees at J. Lohr can now use Exchange Server 2003 along with the Microsoft Office Outlook 2003 messaging and collaboration client to work more effectively by sharing calendars and daily tasks. "That's a great feature for our sales staff," says Sadler. "If they need to work together on national accounts, they can share their schedules and coordinate meetings with everyone, including the vendors. And because we have 100 people working in several different offices, this makes employee collaboration so much better."

For More Information

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For more information about J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines products and services, call (408) 885-1200 or visit the Web site at:
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Microsoft Windows Server System

Microsoft Windows Server System is a line of integrated and manageable server software designed to reduce the complexity and cost of IT. Windows Server System enables you to spend less time and budget on managing your systems so that you can focus your resources on other priorities for you and your business.

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Partner

- ZAG Technical Services, Inc.

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