Borland
®

Borland Software Embraces Migration to Microsoft Server Software

Overview

Country or Region: United States
Industry: Software

Customer Profile

Founded in 1983 and headquartered in Scotts Valley, California, Borland Software is a leading provider of software development tools to businesses worldwide.

Business Situation

Borland needed shared calendaring, mobile functionality, stronger third-party integration, and more cost-effective security management than was available in its Sun ONE/iPlanet messaging platform.

Solution

Borland deployed a messaging environment based on Microsoft® Exchange Server 2003, Windows Server™ 2003 Enterprise Edition, SQL Server™ 2000, and Office Outlook® 2003.

Benefits

- Higher productivity
- Greater collaboration
- Easier mobile access
- Savings in administration
- Lower hardware costs

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> Ron Sha, Chief Information Officer, Borland Software

Seeking shared-calendaring capabilities, greater mobile functionality, stronger integration with third-party software, and simplified security management, Borland Software migrated its messaging solution from a Sun ONE/iPlanet system to one based on Microsoft® Exchange Server 2003, Office Outlook® 2003, and Windows Server™ 2003. As a result, users are enjoying greater productivity and collaboration and the company is reducing costs in system administration, hardware, and application development. The company also has greater access to expert technical resources and new employees who already are familiar with the messaging environment. For these reasons, the firm's chief information officer advocates Microsoft-based solutions for future messaging and application needs.

Microsoft
Windows Server System™

Situation

For more than two decades, Borland Software has provided tools to help simplify and streamline the development of world-class software, and today nearly every company among the Global 2000 is a Borland customer. It's easy to imagine, then, that users in the engineering-driven culture of Borland are discriminating in their use of software. It's also easy to imagine that such a mindset posed a significant challenge for Chief Information Officer Ron Sha when he began to recognize that Borland needed a new messaging platform.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, engineers and other users at Borland relied on Sun ONE/iPlanet Messaging Server for e-mail. "Users liked many things about the platform and were loyal to it," Sha says. "But users also wanted a messaging environment that incorporated shared calendaring, and Sun ONE/iPlanet did not have that capability. So we had to rely on another product and incur the integration and management costs that entailed."

At the same time, Borland began experiencing hardware-related stability problems that prompted Sha and other IT executives to consider an overhaul of the entire messaging platform. And in 2002, the company acquired two other software companies whose messaging platform did incorporate shared calendaring—Microsoft® Exchange Server. This confluence of events led the executives to look seriously at making a move to Exchange Server part of that messaging-platform overhaul.

Solution

Sha and his colleagues began working with Microsoft Services to better understand how a move to Exchange Server 2003 and the Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 operating system on the server and Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003 on the client could address the shared-calendaring problem. In particular, the Microsoft Services consultants provided an architectural review in which they explained how shared calendaring could boost collaboration and productivity.

The consultants also demonstrated how the Cached Exchange Mode feature in the Office Outlook 2003 messaging and collaboration client could improve performance for remote users accessing e-mail from locations without high-speed connectivity. This was a common problem among the company's mobile employees, but one that Sha had not considered initially in his plans to overhaul the messaging platform because the then-current version of Outlook did not support Cached Exchange Mode. "We were delighted to learn that Cached Exchange Mode was planned for the next release of the product—the one that we were considering installing," Sha notes. "We knew it could make a big difference in productivity for the two-thirds of Borland employees who travel on a regular basis and must access their mail from locations without high-speed connectivity."

Microsoft Services also demonstrated to Sha and other IT executives the interoperability features of Exchange Server 2003 and the availability of Microsoft Office Outlook Web Access for those who don't use Windows®-based Web browsers. "We liked how Exchange Server was designed to integrate with third-party applications to a far greater extent than we found in either Sun ONE/iPlanet or Oracle-based messaging solutions," Sha says. "We also liked how Outlook Web Access could simplify e-mail access by users who wanted to continue using a desktop environment other than Windows."

As Sha looked even closer at Exchange Server, still other advantages became apparent. "More companies were using

Exchange Server than were using the competing systems, so we knew it would be easier to find development and support resources," he says. "Also, more users were familiar with the Outlook client, which would be a benefit when it came time to hire new employees."

Even better, Sha learned that because both Windows Server and Exchange Server are part of Microsoft Windows Server System™ integrated server software, migrating to them would put the enterprise in an excellent position to take advantage of the larger Windows Server 2003 platform. "We learned that with Windows Server 2003 on the server, Active Directory® could be established once for Exchange Server and then used for more functionality later as necessary," he explains.

Despite all this, Sha did not find it easy to convince his colleagues that a migration from Sun ONE/iPlanet to Microsoft Exchange Server was the right thing to do. "It was a tough sell, absolutely," he reports. "It took some persuasion to show users, especially high-level executives, the ease of use, the stability, and the advantages of shared calendaring—particularly the ability to synchronize desktop calendars with personal digital assistants." In the case of the company's senior management team, that persuasion took the form of three face-to-face meetings—and even then Sha sensed skepticism. Sha recalls, "Finally, they just said, 'Ron, you're the CIO, you decide.'"

Benefits

And so he did, being careful to take a cautious and thoughtful approach at the beginning—which paid off in more ways than one. "We were very careful to review the architecture so we could be confident of its performance and scalability and to ensure we were assigning the best-qualified engineers to the prototype and pilot," Sha explains. "Consequently, a team of two full-time and

two part-time developers managed to complete the migration and installation in just six months, far sooner than many of us anticipated. The architectural review took an extra two or three weeks. But it was time clearly well spent, when you consider the value of having delivered the solution so quickly."

And that value, Sha points out, became apparent practically from day one.

Boosting Productivity, Collaboration
According to Sha, users have embraced the shared calendaring and calendar synchronization for the everyday productivity and collaboration advantages that it gives them. "With multiple e-mail and calendar systems before, it was almost impossible to share documents or schedule meetings across the company," he explains. "Now, it's simple." This is particularly the case for sales executives and staff, who are using an Exchange Server–based calendar that Sha's team integrated with the firm's sales force automation application.

Those users, and others who travel frequently, also are enjoying the performance advantages provided by Cached Exchange Mode when they access e-mail from locations without high-speed connectivity. "As it turns out, the 'early adopters' both in and out of the sales team were so enthusiastic about these capabilities that many of their more skeptical colleagues decided to join them and migrate from their prior e-mail client to Microsoft Office Outlook," Sha says.

Another advantage of the move to Microsoft Office Outlook is the consistent interface that it provides across the company to Windows users as well as users of other operating environments. "We were pleasantly surprised to find that whether a user has a Windows-based desktop or not, Outlook Web Access is virtually identical in appearance and

functionality to the full Outlook client," Sha reports.

Reducing Administrative Costs
Administrators as well as users are applauding shared calendaring, which enabled Borland to consolidate the separate messaging and calendaring systems it used to use into a single platform. Another administrative benefit came with the migration from three directory services—Novell NetWare, iPlanet, and Lucent QIP (based on the Lightweight Directory Access Protocol)—into a single implementation of the Windows Server 2003 Active Directory service. This move gives users a single sign-on procedure for all applications integrated into the Active Directory structure, simplifying both user access and administration.

Improved security management is yet another benefit. "Through Active Directory, we have a vastly easier approach to managing security than before," Sha explains. "For example, we can enforce a secure logon to the network and ultimately into multiple applications. And we can establish domains so we can push antivirus policies to every desktop in the enterprise with no end-user action required."

Sha also emphasizes that server administration and management in general are easier in the new, Microsoft-based environment. "Exchange Server itself has proven to be very easy to manage," Sha continues. "Moreover, because the migration included moving a number of file servers from Novell NetWare to Windows Server 2003, we are saving administration costs by having a more uniform and consolidated server environment."

Sha anticipates the company will see further management savings as it adds new servers. As he points out, server hardware is widely understood to be less costly in a Windows Server 2003–based environment. The company can realize even more savings, he adds, in application development on the Windows Server platform. "Given the favorable results of the integration of Exchange Server with the sales force automation application, we are confident that we can use the interoperability of Exchange Server and other Windows Server System software to help our current applications work better together," he says. Such applications include solutions for analytics, customer relationship management, and business intelligence—including one that Sha and his team are integrating with Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000 Analysis Services for a more comprehensive level of business intelligence functionality.

"Advocating Microsoft Solutions"
Sha is careful to acknowledge that Borland will continue to run some line-of-business applications on platforms other than the Microsoft Windows family of operating systems. Nonetheless, two-thirds of the 1,400 desktop computers at Borland now run Microsoft Windows XP Professional or Windows 2000 Professional, and most of the company's servers run the Windows Server 2003 operating system. And if Sha has his way, the number of those servers will grow.

"I have no regrets about the decision to move to Exchange Server and the larger Windows Server 2003 environment. And I don't think any of my managers do either, even though some of them initially were very critical of the decision," Sha says. "This is why I am advocating Microsoft solutions at every opportunity."

For More Information

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Microsoft Windows Server System

Microsoft Windows Server System integrated server infrastructure software is designed to support end-to-end solutions built on the Windows Server operating system. Windows Server System creates an infrastructure based on integrated innovation, Microsoft's holistic approach to building products and solutions that are intrinsically designed to work together and interact seamlessly with other data and applications across your IT environment. This helps you reduce the costs of ongoing operations, deliver a more secure and reliable IT infrastructure, and drive valuable new capabilities for the future growth of your business.

For more information about Windows Server System, go to: www.microsoft.com/windowsserversystem

Software and Services

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