



## Windows Vista Customer Solution Case Study



**Customer:** Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn & Co.

**Web Site:** [www.gbkco.com](http://www.gbkco.com)

**Customer Size:** 13 employees

**Country or Region:** United States

**Industry:** Professional services

### Customer Profile

Located in Atlantic, Iowa, Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn & Co. specializes in addressing tax and compliance issues for small businesses and other clients in healthcare, agriculture, and other industries.

### Software and Services

- Windows Vista Business
- Microsoft Office
  - Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007

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## CPA Firm Optimizes User Experience for Gains in Security, Productivity, and Staffing

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*Diane Stender, IT Specialist, Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn & Co.*

*Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn & Co., a certified public accounting (CPA) firm in Iowa, needed a stronger approach to maintaining data security and attracting new hires in a highly competitive business. With deployment of Windows Vista® and the 2007 Microsoft® Office system, the firm anticipates improved data security, a 10 to 15 percent productivity gain for auditors, enhanced customer satisfaction, and greater ease in attracting new talent.*

### Business Needs

Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn & Co. was created from the merger of two long-established certified public accounting (CPA) firms in Atlantic, Iowa. With just 13 people on its payroll, Gronewold serves clients not only in towns and cities across western Iowa but also in many other states.

To maintain its reputation for service and integrity, Gronewold takes pains to address common industry issues before they become problems. One such issue is security. “With accountants and auditors working remotely, we need strong protection of the data that resides on portable computers and is transferred between them and the firm’s central server,” says Diane Stender, IT

Specialist at Gronewold. “We also need consistent protection against spyware.”

Another issue is staffing. “Attracting top-level talent is a big challenge for any CPA firm, especially as undergraduate accounting programs increasingly require a five-year commitment,” says Ken Tegels, Partner at Gronewold. “For a firm like Gronewold, based outside a large city, the challenge is even bigger.”

### Solution

In mid-2006, Stender and Tegels sought to address security and staffing issues by optimizing the firm’s network. They engaged experts from Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner Heartland Technology Solutions,



also based in western Iowa. These experts suggested optimizing not only the network but also the user experience, with the help of the Windows Vista® Business operating system and selected programs from the 2007 Microsoft Office system.

A team from Heartland Technology Solutions deployed those products on several computers at Gronewold, used mostly by senior partners. The team also laid plans to purchase additional Windows Vista-based computers over the course of the following year.

## Benefits

Stender and Tegels anticipate substantial benefits for Gronewold in the areas of security, productivity, and staffing:

- **Improved security.** As Stender points out, with Windows® Defender and Windows BitLocker™ Drive Encryption, Gronewold CPAs now work remotely with significantly greater security, especially in terms of file transfers between portable computers and the server. “This will help the firm to maintain data confidentiality and will help staff members to be more productive,” she says. “Moreover, with Windows User Account Control, we are protected better than ever against spyware and other malicious software.”
- **More efficient auditing.** Stender and Tegels are intrigued by the remote collaboration and workflow opportunities available through Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007, particularly for auditing. “In a typical project, a team of three to four auditors might spend four days out of five at a client site over a period of three to four months,” Stender says. “With SharePoint Server 2007 and its automated workflow and document tracking, auditors can reduce time spent on the project by 10

to 15 percent. That’s a huge financial savings considering that auditing makes up nearly half of all the work we do. Moreover, we’ll be able to complete such projects sooner, improving service to existing clients and enhancing our ability to attract new ones.”

- **Easier data recovery.** For Stender, easier data recovery is one of the everyday advantages of having Windows Vista and programs from the 2007 Office system on the firm’s desktop and portable computers. “With fully integrated Shadow Copy, we can easily recover documents that might otherwise be lost due to errors or corruption at the time they were saved,” she explains. “This will virtually eliminate the occasional problem of someone having to spend an entire afternoon trying to reconstruct a large spreadsheet.”
- **Faster information access and processing.** Stender and Tegels anticipate greater staff productivity overall with the help of such Windows Vista capabilities as Instant Search and Search Folders. “We value anything that can help us access and process information faster and easier, because that is central to what CPAs do,” Tegels says. “It also is central to what makes CPAs more productive and clients more satisfied.”
- **Stronger staffing opportunities.** Tegels says that having the latest desktop and mobile software is a boon in attracting new hires. “This will help Gronewold in recruiting new college graduates,” he says. “As a result, we’ll find it easier to maintain staffing levels without having to resort to outsourcing and the potential disruption in customer service that option entails.”

Deployment of Windows Vista and the 2007 Office system at Gronewold has benefited not only that firm but also Heartland Technology Solutions. “Like Gronewold, we are based in a small town, so being able to point to a successful deployment of Windows Vista and the 2007 Office system shows that we are a significant player in this business,” says Jim Burnette, Senior Account Manager at Heartland Technology Solutions. “That gives us an enormous advantage in customer confidence.”