ELTE

Home Furnishing Retailer Enhances Email Reliability, Saves Time and IT Costs

Overview

Country or Region: Canada
Industry: Retail

Customer Profile
ELTE is one of the world's finest home furnishing suppliers, with a history dating back 90 years to its original founding in France. The company has operated in Canada since the 1940s.

Business Situation
ELTE needed to upgrade its email to improve customer service and employee efficiency, enhance security and reliability, and reduce IT costs.

Solution
The company chose Office 365 to deliver a reliable, secure email solution that provided resource scheduling functionality, increased collaboration and a centralized business contacts list.

Benefits
* Better email reliability
* $40,000 cost savings
* 50% time savings
* Improved customer service

> With Office 365, I no longer have to worry about updating our entire email infrastructure, servers, and licensing around the OS and software, because it is now all up in the cloud.

> Dale Castle, Program Management, ERP and Technology Services Advisor, ELTE

ELTE is a Toronto-based, high end, home furnishings retailer with both private and major corporate clients like the Ritz Carlton Hotel. The retailer's vision, to bring unique home furnishings items to Canada from around the world, has remained intact through a fourth generation of family management. They have been honoured as Retailer of the Year in both Canada and The United States.

ELTE prides itself upon providing excellent customer service to its clients. Much of the day-to-day communication with clients takes place via email and requires the inclusion of large files. ELTE's 150+ Sales, Customer Service, Buyers, and Inventory Management employees use email daily and the existing system wasn't supporting their needs. When it was time for ELTE to upgrade its email system, it found a solution in Microsoft Office 365.

Itergy
Optimizing IT. Empowering People.

Microsoft® Office 365

Situation

The company was facing multiple issues with its outdated email solution, which were impacting their employees' ability to collaborate with each other and communicate with clients. Due to small email file size limits, employees had to send multiple emails to communicate with customers; for instance, providing photos of the various items to a hotel chain or designer buying in bulk. In addition, said Dale Castle, Program Management, ERP and Technology Services Advisor for ELTE, "our email server was chronically ill," causing delays in messages being sent and received.

With no visibility into availability of people or resources, scheduling meetings was difficult, and resources were often double-booked. A central spreadsheet calendar of resources was not readily accessible, and only minimally reduced scheduling issues. Employees periodically missed meetings because the calendar notification didn't get to them in time; they had to be either chased down to join the meeting, or briefed at a later point, which wasted time.

The company was facing an estimated $40,000+ cost to rip and replace their existing email infrastructure with a new on-premise email server with redundancy, plus the added ongoing maintenance costs of licensing upgrades, patches and updates, etc.

"Our main objective was to move to an email environment that supported features that we didn't have with our old system, such as the ability to schedule resources for meetings, support larger file sizes and multiple attachments, and obtain a centralized corporate directory," said Castle.

Solution

Castle worked with Itergy, a Microsoft Gold Partner, to determine the right solution for ELTE. Microsoft Office 365, an online service which unites familiar Microsoft Office applications with email, calendaring, collaboration, and communication solutions, was an ideal fit for uptime reliability, resource tracking, and cost reduction.

The Itergy team, led by Solution Architect Rami Wehbe, created a detailed strategy and migration plan for moving ELTE users from the legacy on-premise email system to Microsoft Office 365 without impacting their daily work. As part of the strategy, the Itergy team leveraged the "out of the box" Microsoft Office 365 IMAP migration tool to reduce the cost of the migration. Itergy did a staged move that minimized the impact of the migration and allowed for individual training. The result was a cost effective migration that was transparent to the end user. "Now, ELTE is better positioned to cost-effectively allocate resources and minimize risk while maximizing efficiency," says Riyaz Lalani, Account Technology Strategist, Itergy.

"In choosing Office 365, it was really important to me that we have seamless integration with the Microsoft environment, and that our users are able to send emails with multiple attachments," said Castle. Now, employees no longer waste time sending multiple emails to customers to accommodate attachments, and customer satisfaction has increased as a result. Employees are also saving time that was previously spent managing and deleting old emails to avoid losing access when they exceeded their limit. Castle estimates that employees have improved email productivity by 50%.

Benefits

With Office 365, ELTE has achieved its goals of delivering reliable email that meets users' needs, improved insight into the availability of people and resources, and cost savings.

Increased email reliability

ELTE employees now have email that is reliable and accommodates the need to attach multiple image files, as well as .pdf or Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. This will in turn reduce the number of emails required to fulfill an order, which has already improved customer satisfaction. "What makes Exchange Online hard to resist is that Microsoft guarantees that it has close to 100% uptime, so I don't have to be concerned about failover. It is all part of the Office 365 cloud infrastructure and platform," commented Castle.

50% time savings

The problems of multiple emails for attachments and with scheduling resources being resolved has resulted in saving employees an estimated 50% of time related to these activities. The company will also synch Microsoft Active Directory with Microsoft Exchange to quickly facilitate adding new employees in the future.

$40,000 cost savings

Though ELTE did not have regular maintenance costs with its prior solution, opting to address issues only when they came up, Castle does anticipate significant cost savings. "With Office 365, I do not have to replace the whole email infrastructure, servers, licensing around the OS and software, because it is now all up in the cloud," he says. The company's estimated cost to deploy a new, on-premise Exchange environment was $40,000 for 195+ employees. Office 365 helped ELTE to avoid this cost.

"If I had doubted Office 365 at all, I would not have undertaken it. It fits well with our Microsoft environment, right down to our ERP. I wanted mail and collaboration to be seamless and reliable across every desktop, and it is," commented Castle. "With a small IT department, we needed a partner to help us look at our options. I wanted the best of the best and found it with Itergy. With their guidance, we'll now be looking at some of the other Office 365 products at some point, like SharePoint, to enable future business improvements or to foster ongoing continuous business improvements."

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers in the United States and Canada who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:
www.microsoft.com

For more information about Itergy products and services, visit the website at: www.itergy.com
or contact us at 1 800 821-2286 or gtasales@itergy.com

For more information about ELTE products and services, visit the website at: www.elte.com

Microsoft Office 365

Microsoft Office 365 brings together cloud versions of our most trusted communications and collaboration products—Microsoft SharePoint Online, Exchange Online, and Lync Online—with the latest version of our Office desktop suite and companion web applications for businesses of all sizes.

Office 365 helps save time and money, and it frees up valued resources. Simple to use and easy to administer, it is financially backed by a service level agreement guaranteeing 99 percent reliability. Office 365 features robust security, IT-level phone support, geo-redundancy, disaster recovery, and the business-class privacy controls and standards that you expect from a world-class service provider.

For more information about Microsoft Office 365, go to:
www.office365.com

Software and Services
Microsoft Office 365
- Microsoft Exchange Online

Microsoft®