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Just The Fax Please — Microsoft Small Business Server Shared Fax Services

From the Nov. 2006 Issue

Sometimes, names can be deceiving. That is definitely the case with Microsoft Small Business Server 2003 (SBS). The functionality in this cost-effective server platform gives a new twist to the definition of small. As our Microsoft Certified Small Business Specialist has learned, SBS is packed with numerous features that can be a gold mine for businesses that take the time to learn what they really have in their hands with this great tool. This month's column will only scratch the surface. The bottom line is that SBS consistently gives a great return on the investment for businesses of all sizes.

One of our team's favorite features is the "Shared Fax Services" capability. It's been a real winner for us, and a near lifesaver for one of our clients. Pardon the lifesaving analogy, but the client happens to be in the business of medicine. Here's how they "saw the light" of SBS's value using just the Shared Fax Services component.

For this five-doctor practice, nothing was more frustrating than the unending paper nightmare that was taking time away from the business of servicing their patients. Each day meant more and more critical information being delivered by fax. These included lab results, x-ray reports, new patient files, hospital reports and more. On top of the volume issue, there was also the issue of which satellite office received the fax, so the physician who needed to see it might not be in office where it was sent. Even with the fax in their hands, they still had the challenge of getting the information into the patient file in a timely manner.

So a physician would go in to examine a patient only to find out that vital

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As an electronic document, the fax could be easily shared, filed and accessed by any member of the practice from any location. Now, all incoming faxes come in as *.TIF files and are quickly renamed for easy identification and access. The doctors and staff at this practice are now back to the business of medicine. This medical practice definitely took advantage of the receiving capabilities of SBS Shared Fax Services, but the features don't end there. The flip side of the tool is best illustrated by a distribution client that sells parts. Staff members spend the day sending quotes to customers and prospects. Speed is of the essence. Since their product is not unique, they decided that using technology to provide better customer service would be the best way to differentiate their company from others. They wanted to be a cut above the rest.

It was clear that the company's six customer service representatives were not operating at peak efficiency. Any time they needed to fax out a quote or order, they had to put the customer or prospect on hold and leave their desk to go stand by the fax machine. The distributor had set up four fax lines just for outbound faxing. They now needed more fax machines. And between the cost of fax machines and phone lines, it was getting expensive. Plus, the company owners had a vision that they would like to increase their speed of delivery of quotes and have better documentation of information for customers and prospects.

They knew a better use of technology could improve customer satisfaction and build more customer loyalty. Like the medical client discussed earlier, the answer again was SBS Shared Fax Service. In this case, it was for outbound faxing.

The fact was that most of their documents were already computer generated, which meant it was that much easier to set up SBS Shared Fax Services to send faxes directly from their desktop. It was a quick return on investment. Customer service reps started saving time and, more importantly, both customer and employee

satisfaction soared. For those documents they needed to send that were not

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Technology

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