

## Tourism Calgary Opens its Doors to Collaboration with Move from Novell to Microsoft

### Overview

Country: Canada

Industry: Travel and Tourism

### Customer Profile

Tourism Calgary, the non-profit destination marketing organization for the city of Calgary, strives to build relationships with travelers and travel professionals through technology-supported activities.

### Business Situation

Tourism Calgary's Novell legacy applications provided limited support and interoperability, and were moving to a Linux-based operating system which would require costly staff training.

### Solution

Tourism Calgary standardized on Microsoft® technologies including Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003, Microsoft Exchange Server 2003, and Microsoft Business Solutions-Navision Professional.

### Benefits

- Simplified management and administration
- Improved communications
- Increased interoperability with mobile devices
- Enhanced integration with industry-

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Calgary, a vibrant cosmopolitan city in Western Canada, welcomes over four million visitors every year. Since 1957, the city's marketing organization, Tourism Calgary, has been building relationships with travelers and travel professionals in support of Calgary's CDN\$1 billion tourism industry. In 2005, Tourism Calgary's management realized its outdated Novell-based IT infrastructure provided limited support and interoperability. These obstacles, combined with Novell's move to a Linux-based server operating system, compelled the company to re-evaluate its IT platform. It standardized on Microsoft® technologies including Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003, Microsoft Exchange Server 2003, and Microsoft Business Solutions-Navision®, now part of Microsoft Dynamics™. The migration simplified IT administration and management, and increased collaboration and communication capabilities for users.

## Situation

Nestled in the foothills of Canada's Rocky Mountains, Calgary is a place where visitors come to explore the heritage of the Canadian West. Tourism Calgary, a non-profit destination marketing organization, has a mandate to establish relationships with travelers, meeting planners, and other travel industry professionals in support of the city's tourism industry, which supports more than CDN\$57 million in municipal tax revenues and employs over 18,000 people. The organization is supported by approximately 600 members, and receives funding from municipal and provincial governments. Its efforts help Calgary welcome nearly four million annual visitors to the city, who spend almost \$1 billion enjoying local attractions and amenities.

Tourism Calgary uses technology-supported initiatives to promote the city within the United States and international markets. A reliable IT infrastructure and e-mail communication system is essential for the organization to collaborate with its members and stakeholders, and to interact with clients.

In 2005, Tourism Calgary realized its aging Novell platform required an overhaul. It had been in place for more than a decade, and consisted of Novell NetWare 6.5 and GroupWise, its e-mail and calendaring software. The legacy system hindered the organization's effectiveness because it possessed limited e-mail functionality and poor integration with handheld mobile devices.

"With our existing architecture, we couldn't use our e-mail system to do things we knew that other platforms could do, and we had a ton of problems trying to integrate our mobile devices with GroupWise through third-party applications," recalls Paul Scheirick, IT Manager for Tourism Calgary.

E-mail functionality was also hampered by the organization's inability to create group e-mail aliases within GroupWise. To increase sales leads and have regular communication with clients, Tourism Calgary wanted to use group e-mail aliases as a means of properly distributing and protecting crucial client data.

"When potential clients contact us through our Web site, we would much rather they contact us through a group alias to ensure we are receiving all sales leads," says Scheirick. "It's really important that we don't miss an e-mail from a tour operator or convention organizer just because someone is on vacation or has moved on from our company and no one can monitor another employee's e-mail account. We didn't have a good group alias-type system to ensure those leads could be transferred to another employee."

Besides e-mail issues, another challenge associated with the organization's existing infrastructure was limited functionality for its project accounting processes. Tourism Calgary was using ACCPAC for Windows® Small Business Series but the solution was no longer meeting its needs.

"With the version of ACCPAC we were using, we were no longer able to run multiple budgets every year. Not only that, but reporting was slow," comments Aldon Wells, Vice President of Finance and Operations, Tourism Calgary.

Tourism Calgary also faced a number of challenges in upgrading and maintaining its IT system. Issues of interoperability with industry specific software made upgrades particularly complicated. "Whenever we performed an upgrade, our server would often be down for an entire weekend. We would finally get it running on Monday morning just barely," explains Scheirick.

Additionally, the organization experienced frequent system crashes, causing lengthy system outages. "Constantly backing up everything became a necessity, but slow backup speeds with NetWare made this a challenge for us."

To complicate matters, lack of resources meant Tourism Calgary had to spend time sourcing answers to problems on its own, or rely on a systems integrator for help – a costly proposition for minor IT issues.

"In Calgary, it's difficult to find resources trained in supporting Novell systems," advises Scheirick. "If I needed to source out a quick answer to a small problem, such as a printing issue, it became a convoluted process because no one knew the answer. Sure, we could have our systems integrator on permanent retainer and he could help us with all the little things, but our budget just does not allow for that."

Tourism Calgary also discovered that the Novell platform would be moving to a Linux-based server operating system. The organization had no familiarity with Linux-based solutions, and was reluctant to invest time and resources learning the platform when it already had past experience running Microsoft® solutions successfully, such as Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000.

"Issues with the Novell platform were starting to add up. The final straw was changing it to a Linux-based system," advises Scheirick. "It just didn't make any sense to climb that huge mountain when we had other options."

## Solution

Tourism Calgary enlisted the help of its long-time IT partner Knight Enterprises Inc., a Calgary-based Microsoft Certified Partner specializing in network infrastructure solutions. Previously, Knight Enterprises Inc. had helped Tourism Calgary support and

upgrade its Novell Netware infrastructure when necessary. As Tourism Calgary faced increasing integration and reliability challenges, Knight Enterprises Inc. recommended a move to Microsoft technology.

"All of the applications Tourism Calgary was using were developed to run on the Windows operating system," says David Kampel, President, Knight Enterprises Inc. "For example, an industry-specific application they were using to keep track of their members was really developed to integrate with the Microsoft Outlook® messaging and collaboration client—and not GroupWise, so that it was a constant struggle for these applications to work with GroupWise adequately."

Tourism Calgary considered upgrading to Novell Open Enterprise Server, but determined that overall familiarity with Microsoft technology within the company made selecting the Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 operating system a more viable option. (Windows Server 2003 is the cornerstone of Microsoft Windows Server System™ integrated server system.)

"Tourism Calgary was comfortable moving forward with our recommendation," advises Kampel. "They were confident in the reliability and security of Microsoft technology. The idea of actually resolving all of Tourism Calgary's integration and e-mail issues by switching from GroupWise to the Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 messaging and collaboration server was quite appealing to Tourism Calgary."

Knight Enterprises Inc. worked with Tourism Calgary's IT administrator to begin planning the organization's migration in September 2005. The migration was conducted quickly, and completed over a four-day weekend in November 2005.

"There wasn't a need to test the environment since we were already aware that their industry-specific and file-and-print applications would run on Windows Server 2003," comments Kampel. "We do all of the preparation that can be done at our site before the server is delivered to the client site. As a result, the migration was straightforward and barely disrupted everyday operations or staff."

During the migration from GroupWise to Microsoft Exchange Server, Knight Enterprises Inc. was also able to ensure that none of Tourism Calgary's important data was lost.

"There was a mass of important business information stored in the company's GroupWise address books," comments Rose Crowley, Vice President, Knight Enterprises Inc. "By writing some custom code we were able to move every single bit of that data to Exchange Server."

Tourism Calgary also chose to upgrade its accounting system at the same time, after seeing the benefits that its peer organization, Tourism Vancouver, was enjoying after converting its accounting system to Microsoft Business Solutions-Navision® software, now part of Microsoft Dynamics™. Tourism Calgary migrated its existing ACCPAC for Windows solution to Microsoft Navision running on Microsoft SQL Server™ 2000.

"We needed a solution to help us improve our reporting speed, and allow us to keep track of our costs much more closely," explains Wells. "Microsoft Navision solves these issues by significantly streamlining our accounting processes, and increasing our overall system stability."

## Benefits

Since deploying Microsoft-based technology, Tourism Calgary has seen a number of additional benefits. With Windows Server 2003 and Exchange Server 2003, the not-for-profit organization has centralized its operations into one data centre, providing a more stable platform, increasing reliability and making it easier to integrate and administer applications.

The integration and new features within the Microsoft platform have also helped reduce costs and improve manageability, providing the organization with a scalable solution for the future. The staff is now able to communicate more efficiently with clients and members, helping to improve productivity and grow the business. And deploying Microsoft Navision has helped streamline its accounting processes.

### ***Improved Management Capabilities***

The Windows Server 2003 operating system with Microsoft Active Directory® directory service helps Tourism Calgary manage its IT systems more easily, and has virtually eliminated the system outages the organization experienced with its previous platform.

"I can set up a user domain more quickly now, and our server upgrades are simpler and faster," notes Scheirick. "We just load the upgrade and Microsoft provides good conversion programs which ensure that we have practically no downtime."

Microsoft Active Directory helps simplify the organization's user login experience through a single company domain, and provides enhanced security features. "With Active Directory, we are able to administer group controls for Exchange Server, as well as for access to various applications, directories, and even different printers, giving us added security," notes Scheirick.

In addition, with an extensive network of Microsoft resources available to the organization, Tourism Calgary has reduced the time and costs associated with technical support.

"Now that we're using the same technology as other destination marketing organizations, I'm able to get more help from my peers across North America on little day-to-day issues as well as larger-scale projects," observes Scheirick. "As a non-profit organization, we don't have the funding to hire additional IT support on a full-time basis. The wide availability of Microsoft technology resources helps make it easier for me to manage the system, which in turn has made me more valuable to the organization."

#### ***Enhanced E-mail Experience***

Migrating to Exchange Server 2003 has also provided an enriched e-mail experience for Tourism Calgary's staff. "Users can now customize e-mails to clients, which is really important for a marketing organization like ours," relates Scheirick. "Our staff likes the fact that they can now insert logos and other customized greetings and signatures so that we stand out in the crowd."

The ability to establish group aliases for email contacts coming through their website ensures that Tourism Calgary doesn't miss important emails – even if when staff changes or takes vacation.

The organization is also training its users on all of the new functionality available in Exchange and Outlook, such as e-mail and folder organization, calendaring, and contact tools.

#### ***Streamlined Accounting Processes***

By migrating from ACCPAC for Windows to Microsoft Navision, Tourism Calgary is able to generate reports more quickly, which is

helping the company track its costs more effectively. The system upgrade also has the benefit of a more stable environment based on SQL Server 2000.

"With Microsoft Navision, we no longer require integrity checks on the system," Wells explains. "Overall, it works much more efficiently which is a huge benefit for us in terms of saving time."

#### ***Integrating for the Future***

Prior to the platform migration, Tourism Calgary was unable to integrate its mobile handheld devices and calendaring functionality with its e-mail system. Once Exchange Server 2003 was in place, e-mail system interoperability with its mobile collaboration tools was seamless, allowing users to send and receive time-sensitive information more quickly to clients and members.

Tourism Calgary is also able to easily integrate its Microsoft Internet Security and Acceleration Server 2004 into the new platform, improving file-transfer protocol management and administration of the Web server.

"It's extremely helpful to have everything integrated in-house because it enables us to have full control over the systems and network," advises Scheirick. "I don't think I could have done that affordably with Linux and if the server was offsite, which was an alternative that was proposed to us. Our costs would have jumped significantly."

With a strong and reliable platform in place, Tourism Calgary is planning to upgrade its existing SQL Server 2000 to SQL Server 2005, and deploy a new Web server and firewall, based on Microsoft technologies. Further, the non-profit organization's management plans to expand its use of

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capabilities that are available in Windows Server 2003.

"We will be investigating more Active Directory features, as well as how we can use Shadow Copy Client to further prevent data loss," concludes Scheirick. "I didn't realize how many more benefits I could achieve through Microsoft technology; it has opened up a whole bunch of doors for us."

## Microsoft Windows Server System

Microsoft®Windows Server System is a comprehensive, integrated, and interoperable server infrastructure that helps reduce the complexity and costs of building, deploying, connecting, and operating agile business solutions. Windows Server System helps customers create new value for their business through the strategic use of their IT assets. With the Windows Server operating system as its foundation, Windows Server System delivers dependable infrastructure for data management and analysis; enterprise integration; customer, partner, and employee portals; business process automation; communications and collaboration; and core IT operations including security, deployment, and systems management.

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## Software & Services

- Active Directory
- Microsoft Dynamics NAV
- Windows Server System
- Windows XP
- Outlook 2003

## Partners

- Knight Enterprises Inc.

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