

Birketts

Reducing Onsite Storage and Supporting a Seamless Merger

Following a merger and an impending upgrade to Exchange 2010, Birketts sought to reduce its overall investment in hardware and reduce the pressure on the Exchange infrastructure.

Context

Birketts is a successful regional law firm with offices in Ipswich, Norwich, Cambridge and Chelmsford. In September 2010, a merger with Chelmsford-based boutique firm Wollastons propelled Birketts into the UK top 100 law firms. It now has 52 partners and a total staff of 350.

Challenge

Birketts had historically used email as a document management system; however, as the firm expanded, email volume increased dramatically. More users sending more emails meant that the local system was overflowing. Searching the archive was beginning to take too long and multiple searches created latency issues across the network.

At a Glance

Company

- Birketts LLP (www.birketts.co.uk)
- Industry: Legal
- Number of Email Users: 350

Solution

- Improve archive search and reduce latency issues across the network
- Reduce onsite hardware and cost of migration to Exchange 2010
- Improve supplier service levels
- Deliver a resilient DR solution to ensure email uptime

Benefits

- Cloud-based storage and archiving reduces burden on local systems and overcomes latency issues
- Single solution for email management delivers archiving, storage and security
- Supported seamless merger with email continuity during integration of new office and fee-earners
- Improved resilience and disaster recovery
- Reduction in hardware onsite has delivered administrative to resolve specific email issues
- Improved management of email within the organisation

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Chris Simmon - IT Director, Birketts LLPd

Birketts had a traditional Exchange environment with locally attached storage, including numerous disks attached to the server. The system was backed up by an offsite mirror image of the Exchange server and supported by a selection of third-party products for security, continuity and disaster recovery.

The planned upgrade to Exchange 2010 would have required two additional servers and terabytes of extra storage space. The Wollastons merger exacerbated these challenges. The need for fast, seamless integration of the new office and the realization that additional users would place further pressure on the firm’s already overstretched IT infrastructure led IT Director Chris Simmons to look for an alternative email management solution.

Solution

“As we were already utilising offsite back up, cloud-based email was the obvious solution to our data storage and retrieval issues,” says Simmons, who had worked successfully with Mimecast before. “I chose Mimecast because I knew what to expect in terms of service levels,” he says.

The merger with Wollastons, another Mimecast customer, took place several months after the initial switchover to Mimecast.

“Mimecast’s service team did an amazing job and helped us to achieve a seamless merger notwithstanding policy conflicts between the two systems,” says Simmons. “Although there were no new mailboxes, careful profiling was required so that emails could be filed, labelled, formatted and styled correctly. The switchover took place on a Sunday night, and our email was working smoothly on Monday morning.”

“We have now ingested our historical data to Mimecast’s grid, removing all data from the local server and with Mimecast’s assistance we will soon transition to Exchange 2010 with extremely little downtime. Together these changes will address the ongoing issue of email storage.”

Reducing hardware was an important business driver for moving the firm’s email to the cloud.

“It removes the need for increased storage or a WAN synch and our new Exchange infrastructure will be much smaller than its predecessor,” says Simmons. Rather than the six terabyte drives we would have needed to upgrade, we will have four 500 gigabyte drives, and there’s no need for a second Exchange server for disaster recovery.”

“The result is that we will halve power requirements. And thanks to Mimecast’s email archive we no longer need Enterprise Vault, which means we’re using one less server for storage which also needed replicating offsite. Also there’s also no need for Cryoserver or KVS when you have Mimecast in the game. All in all a fantastic saving.”

Not only have Birketts’ onsite storage requirements decreased but the end user experience has improved, thanks to instantaneous archiving, continuity and the seamless integration with Outlook.

“We now have real email continuity – previously we had a DR site with a failover server, but we needed to give four hours notice! We couldn’t just invoke the Exchange server; we had to invoke the entire DR scenario including the NT domain and the case management system. With Mimecast, our users can now access their email at all times and perform rapid searches on the online archive instead of overloading our local systems,” adds Simmons.

Mimecast’s solution means that Birketts has consolidated its requirements. As Simmons observes, working with one supplier rather than many saves time, boosts resilience and mitigates risk.

“We are no longer reliant on multiple third parties as we’ve entrusted our entire email management to a specialist.”continuity and archiving in one integrated platform and can support us with the same level of service and support globally makes them stand out from their competitors.”