



Customer Success Story

Weston Benshoof Rochefort Rubalcava & MacCuish LLP

“On a day-to-day basis, the hardware in our IT infrastructure contributes to every case we handle and everything we do. We have a solid, scalable and reliable solution and strong partners in HP and Afinety.” – Valerie Wenzel, Director of Technology, Weston, Benshoof, Rochefort, Rubalcava & MacCuish LLP

Weston Benshoof relies on stable, scalable IT infrastructure to build its case

Among the major law firms in the highly competitive southern California market, Weston, Benshoof, Rochefort, Rubalcava & MacCuish LLP built its reputation on expertise in environmental law. Founded in 1984, Weston Benshoof has since evolved into a diversified firm with a range of practice areas dedicated to creative solutions and long-term client relationships.

Ranging from entrepreneurs on the rise to the elite of the Fortune 500, Weston Benshoof’s clients are served by a team of more than 60 attorneys, their support staff, and a freshly updated HP infrastructure that has the firm well-positioned for continued growth. “Quality legal work requires sophisticated technology,” says Valerie Wenzel, Weston Benshoof’s director of technology. “To provide our clients with the quality of service they expect, we employ highly skilled IT professionals and state-of-the-art IT systems.”

Crash prevention

When Wenzel started with Weston Benshoof in 1997, the IT infrastructure was overworked and underpowered. “People were having to deal with their PCs crashing at least once a day,” she says. “There was a lot of new legal software coming out, and part of the problem was that it was overwhelming the equipment.” Calls to their vendor produced less-than-satisfactory results as well.

In 1999, the time arrived for a regularly scheduled and badly needed technology refresh. The firm’s IT integrator, Afinety Inc., a Los Angeles-based provider of computer networks for small and medium-sized businesses and today an authorized HP reseller, recommended switching to Compaq hardware. “Compaq has a good reputation in the



legal industry, our integrator was a Compaq partner, and it was time for a change," Wenzel recalls.

In making its decision, Weston Benshoof recognized that its best course was to standardize on a scalable infrastructure that would allow it to seamlessly add applications as attorneys' needs changed and be able to accommodate new software that required ever-increasing computing power. "Attorneys don't have the time to get involved in technology issues," Wenzel says. "They need to be able to optimally manage large amounts of information without thinking about it, and achieving that level of transparency was our goal."

While technology isn't a day-to-day priority for the attorneys, it is for Wenzel. And with hundreds of thousands of documents to manage, her team's goal is to create a system that takes all of the firm's information sources – such as email, case-related documents and financial data – and streamline the way this data is accessed, regardless of format.

"Some firms pour their money into what they see as the next great thing, but I've found this tends not to work in the long term," Wenzel says. "You need to take established business practices and apply technology to them."

Steady, stylish and fast

From the first Compaq refresh, Wenzel knew the firm was on the right track. "We immediately went from a highly unstable network to a very solid, stable one. The desktop PCs were stable, and the ProLiant servers we went to on the back end tied everything together and gave us a dependable and reliable infrastructure," she says.

"People were astounded after the first refresh with the capabilities of the new technology," Wenzel says. "There was significantly less crashing, and an enormous increase in speed."

When the three-year refresh cycle arrived again last summer, Weston Benshoof was able to raise the performance level again, this time with the HP banner. The firm's IT infrastructure now features Evo desktop PCs, 17-inch flat-panel monitors, HP ProLiant ML350 servers, HP 4100 series LaserJet printers and HP digital scanners.

"The 17-inch monitors are beautiful, and they help present the type of image we want to have as a company," Wenzel says. "The attorneys love them. They view a large volume of imaged documents and needed a larger screen. The resolution and clarity are fantastic, and the small footprint on the desktop is a huge gain for them."

Knowledgeable staff at Afinety and HP helped make the upgrade a breeze for Wenzel and her in-house IT staff. "Afinety is wonderful," she says. "We've worked with them for many years and they highly recommend HP. That carries tremendous weight with us. Having a local HP partner is critically important and a vital benefit."





“Having a seamless hardware transition was imperative, and was achieved,” Wenzel says. “Being able to plug in the machines, have them work correctly from the start and image them quickly was very important. It was transparent, even to us, and that made a big statement.”

New additions to the Weston Benshoof solution include a multi-year leasing package with HP Financial Services that Wenzel says the firm is very satisfied with, as well as HP Care Pack services and online support.

Risk and reward

Standardizing on HP hardware has provided Weston Benshoof with the IT infrastructure it needs to move forward. “The process of establishing a three- to four-year lease and standardizing on HP desktops and servers has helped set the foundation for what we need to do,” Wenzel says. “The improvement we made in going from the original environment to Compaq, and now HP, was enormous and changed and improved our operations.

“When I first came into this position, the decision to move to a new vendor was significant for the firm,” she says. “HP proved its solid reputation and came through seamlessly.”

“On a day-to-day basis, the hardware in our IT infrastructure contributes to every case we handle and everything we do. We have a solid, scalable and reliable solution and strong partners in HP and Afinety,” Wenzel says.

###

Challenge

- To create a stable, dependable IT infrastructure that can manage hundreds of thousands of documents and support a staff of more than 60 attorneys and their support staffs in a fast-paced corporate environment. Solution also needs to be readily scalable to accommodate new, large-footprint software and changing attorney needs.

Solution

- Compaq Evo D310 desktop PCs
- Compaq TFT1701 flat panel monitors
- HP ProLiant ML350 servers
- HP 4100 series LaserJet printers
- HP digital scanners
- Microsoft Windows XP architecture
- Microsoft Office XP
- Law Office Accelerator contact management system

Results

- Standardizing on HP hardware has provided Weston Benshoof with the IT infrastructure it needs to move forward.



- Numerous hardware crashes and a lack of support from the previous vendor were eliminated, replaced by greater speed and dramatically higher levels of system reliability.
- Overall customer experience with HP much higher than with previous vendor.
- Aesthetic appeal of hardware components helped the firm create the type of image it desired to present to clients.

At a glance

Company: Weston Benshoof Rochefort Rubalcava & MacCuish LLP

Location: Los Angeles, California

Founded: 1984

URL: www.wbcounsel.com

Phone: 213.576.1000

Primary business: A California-based law firm that provides a broad range of integrated legal services. Practice areas include business litigation, construction, corporate, energy, environmental, intellectual property, labor and employment, land use, real estate, toxic tort, franchise and water resources.

August 2003

© Copyright 2003 Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P. The information contained herein is subject to change without notice.