# HP, AMD, and Microsoft® deliver network to support company growth

HP ProLiant servers running Microsoft Windows® Small Business Server (SBS) enable building-materials distributor Gypsum Supply to continue expansion without adding IT staff

*"Having high-quality HP servers and switches, along with Microsoft Small Business Server for monitoring the network, gives me confidence that I will be able to support the expansion of Gypsum Supply over the next three years."*

—Alan Sauerbrei, CTO, Wright Family Office (affiliate of Gypsum Supply)

**GYPSUM**SUPPLY

HP customer case study: HP ProLiant servers, Microsoft Windows Small Business Server

Industry: building-materials distribution

## Objective

Build a corporate network that enhances employee communication and improves security and reliability of computers companywide

## Approach

Deploy two HP ProLiant servers with AMD processors, two HP ProCurve network switches, and Microsoft Windows SBS to facilitate file sharing, improved messaging and calendar functionality, and easier management of the company's desktop and laptop machines

## IT improvements

- 100% server reliability since February 2009
- Reliable network switches preventing downtime
- Desktop machines more secure companywide
- Small footprint making servers convenient
- Greater scalability for continued growth

## Business benefits

- Up to 200 hours a year saved by CTO through remote server management
- Projected $15,000 saved annually by supporting growth without adding IT staff or contract support
- Faster response to customer needs
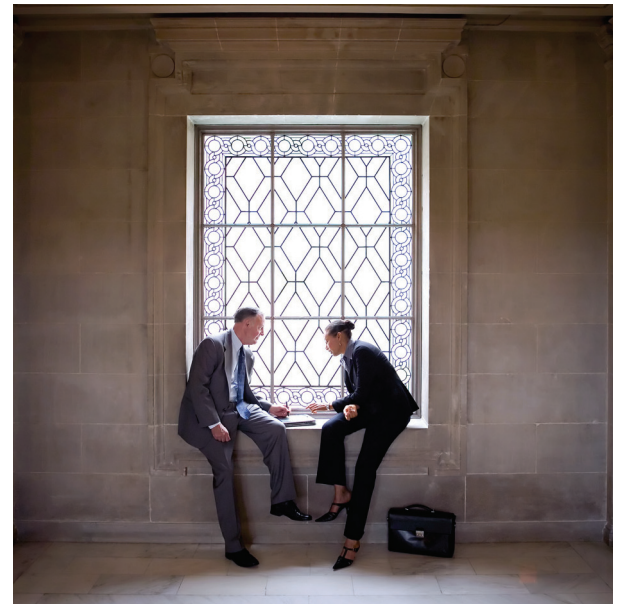- Streamlined flow of inventory and resources



**Building market share**

Gypsum Supply, Ltd. sells and distributes building materials to businesses across north Texas. To compete against regional and national distributors, the organization works to provide the best customer service in its market. Delivering the right products to the right place at the right time is crucial, but in late 2008, the right IT wasn't in place to support the growing company.

Computers in Gypsum Supply's four offices were connected via a peer-to-peer network, which employees used for sharing printers and accessing an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. "There was no central place to store documents; all information existed on individual PCs," explains Alan Sauerbrei, CTO of Gypsum Supply's affiliate company, Wright Family Office, and sole IT employee of both businesses. In addition, the company lacked an in-house email server; each desktop computer had its own Post Office Protocol (POP) email connection. Sauerbrei worried that Gypsum Supply would have difficulty expanding unless it upgraded to a network that better supported employee communication and file sharing.

As he pondered his options, Sauerbrei entered Gypsum Supply in a contest sponsored by HP, AMD, and Microsoft. To his surprise, the company won two HP ProLiant DL385 Servers; two HP ProCurve Switch 1800 series network switches; 2 HP Compaq 2710p laptops; an HP Color LaserJet CP4005n Printer; Microsoft Windows Server 2008; and Microsoft Windows Small Business Server (SBS) 2008 Premium, which includes Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 and Windows SharePoint Services.

**Better communication all around**
Sauerbrei was pleased and began to upgrade the company's network in February 2009. "We've used HP ProLiant servers in Wright Family Office for years, so I really felt comfortable with the servers and the infrastructure coming from HP," he says. Within a week, he had a server running SBS.

One benefit stems from the company's move from paper calendars to shared, Web-based calendars. Now it's easier to coordinate inventory and resources, Sauerbrei says. In addition, salespeople can respond faster to customers. "Being able to wirelessly sync calendars, contacts and emails lets us serve customers more quickly," Sauerbrei says. "Our quote process is complex; there are quite a few variables that have to be considered. Even if salespeople can't provide a quote right away, they can respond from their smart phone and let the customer know when to expect the quote."

**Security and reliability boosted companywide**
Before the network upgrade, IT management posed a significant challenge. "Tech support was difficult," Sauerbrei says, "because we didn't know what was on each PC. We had 23 PCs in four offices, and there was no way to see their status from a central location. When a computer had a problem, fixing it was an adventure because there wasn't any consistency."

Now Sauerbrei can pull up a single console in Windows Small Business Server that shows the operating system, service packs, security patches, and antivirus updates for every desktop computer in the company. "With the SBS environment, I can look at those things proactively," he says. "It's hard to quantify, but I'm saving time by monitoring the PCs and doing preventive maintenance. More important, if I see a problem—like an antivirus update that doesn't complete—I can take care of it right away."

Sauerbrei has greater command of the impact maintenance has on bandwidth: "Managing Windows updates through Windows Server Update Services (WSUS) on the SBS server allows us to control the timing and status of the Windows updates," he says.

Installation of the HP ProCurve network switches has enhanced the reliability of the company's IT environment. "Previously, we were using several cheap switches," Sauerbrei explains. "About twice a year, connections would go down, and I would find that if I moved to a port on another switch, they would work again. That took a couple hours to troubleshoot each time. I see a definite improvement with the ProCurve switches. Both security and reliability have improved throughout the company."

### Saving up to 200 hours a year

The HP ProLiant servers have yet to experience any downtime, and Sauerbrei monitors their status remotely through SBS. "The remote access is key because I can resolve a problem quickly, whether I'm at one of Gypsum Supply's four locations or at a Wright Family Office location," he explains. "Not having to travel every time I want to check on a server or respond to a user request saves me three or four hours a week—up to 200 hours a year—which is tremendously helpful."

In addition, Sauerbrei likes the servers' footprint. "Both servers, plus both switches, fit into a self-contained, half-height rack that locks," he says. "Space savings is a real benefit for us, and the rack enables us to keep the servers in our telecommunications closet. They don't consume floor space in an office, and I'm confident that they are secure."

Next on Sauerbrei's agenda is a document management system for sharing images such as delivery tickets. He projects that rolling out that system, which the new network makes possible, will reduce the time employees spend researching each discrepancy in customer billing or delivery status from three or four hours to ten minutes.

"The ability for local and remote offices to email proof of delivery directly to customers will streamline the discrepancy resolution process and increase customers' confidence in our billing processes," Sauerbrei notes. "This will help us keep current customers and attract new ones."

## Solution at a glance

**Hardware**
• HP ProLiant DL385 Servers with AMD Opteron™ 2384 processors
• HP Rack 10000 series half-height enclosed rack
• HP Color LaserJet CP4005n Printer
• HP ProCurve Switch 1800 series
• HP Compaq 2710p Notebooks

**Software**
• Microsoft Windows Small Business Server 2008 Premium
• Microsoft Exchange Server 2007
• Windows SharePoint Services
• Activant Eagle
• SonicWALL Anti-Virus
• Trend Micro Worry-Free Business Security

**Operating system**
• Microsoft Windows Server 2008
• Microsoft Windows Vista®
• Microsoft Windows XP

**Network protocol**
• TCP/IP

## About Gypsum Supply, Ltd.

For 15 years, Gypsum Supply, Ltd. (**gypsupply.com**) has delivered drywall and other interior-building materials to residential and commercial construction sites in the Dallas–Fort Worth area. As the company has grown to occupy four offices across north Texas, supporting communication among its 50 employees has become a key IT challenge.

**Continuing growth without adding staff**

Gypsum Supply anticipates continued expansion for the near future. "The plan for this company is to increase market share and continue adding locations, which means adding people and relying more heavily on the IT infrastructure," Sauerbrei says. He expects the reliable, secure, and easy-to-monitor network to enable him to support this expansion without requiring additional IT staff hours—a cost avoidance of about $15,000 a year in contract support. The expansion would have been extremely difficult or impossible with the former peer-to-peer network.

"We didn't implement this solution to reduce overhead; we had to do this to stay competitive," Sauerbrei says. "Having high-quality HP servers and switches, along with Microsoft Small Business Server for monitoring the network, gives me confidence that I will be able to support the expansion of Gypsum Supply over the next three years."
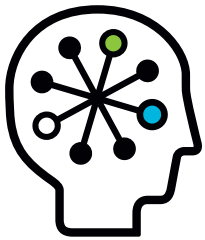
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