

Driving Success: Leading Tire Distributor Revamps IT Systems to Support Future Growth

Introduction

Kenda USA is a leading North American distributor of tire and tube products for bicycles, motorcycles, golf carts, lawn mowers, industrial vehicles, trailers and automobile. A wholly-owned subsidiary of Kenda Rubber in Taiwan, one of the world's largest tire and tube producers, the Reynoldsburg, Ohio, company operates seven offices and warehouses in the U.S. Kenda USA is also a proud sponsor of world athletes, including 2003 British Open winner, Ben Curtis, and Maris Strombergs, the BMX gold medalist at the 2008 Beijing games.

Challenge

Kenda USA realized it sorely needed to revamp its outdated and largely unsupported information technology (IT) network, or risk costly downtime. A system crash could result in tens of thousands of dollars in daily losses. Meanwhile, constant disconnects within its Citrix environment, which could not be updated on its aging servers, often left employees idle and unproductive. Unreliable backup servers failed nearly half the time.

Worse still, the existing server network could not support the software upgrades needed to maintain licensing requirements to add new users. "We actually had a situation where a new user was unable to login due to a lack of licensing," explained Steve Schaar, Kenda USA's Group IT Mgr.

"That was the final straw. We realized the whole IT system needed an overhaul."

Action Plan 'Saves In Long Run'

Yet a simple fix wasn't easy. Kenda USA's IT network, which connected approximately 140 people in seven U.S. offices, ran on a dozen older servers that no longer carried maintenance contracts. Yet replacing all the servers would be prohibitively expensive. In search of a smart, cost-effective solution, Kenda USA principals interviewed numerous providers. Finally, a meeting with Affiliated Resource Group, a local consulting firm based in Columbus, Ohio, produced the right fix for the short- and long-term.

Affiliated proposed that Kenda USA first conduct a comprehensive network assessment before spending a dime on new technology. As a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner with Microsoft Certified System Engineers on staff, Affiliated was able to perform the review and design a comprehensive plan going forward. They then recommended the hardware and software upgrades needed to bring the network current. "They worked to solve our problems today, but with one eye on future growth," Schaar says.



KENDA

www.kendausa.com

Challenge

A leading North American rubber and tire products distributor needed to upgrade its aging and sorely neglected IT network in order to successfully support its growing business.

Solution

Affiliated, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, performed a complete network review, designed the upgrade plan and implemented the revamped IT system.

Key software/hardware:

- Microsoft® Exchange 2007
- Microsoft Office Communications Server
- Microsoft Office 2007 Enterprise Edition
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003/2008

"From pre-planning to implementation and ongoing support, Affiliated has brought our network up-to-date in a short timeframe and with zero downtime. Now we have a much more flexible, secure and reliable network to ensure access to our data 24/7/365."

- Steve Schaar, Information Technology Manager, Kenda USA

Consolidation with no downtime

Following the extensive five-week IT assessment, Affiliated brought Kenda USA back in compliance with industry “best practices” for a state-of-the-art IT network. To begin with, Affiliated consolidated 12 servers into two host Hewlett-Packard® ProLiant™ servers, reducing the server footprint and saving dramatically on new hardware and energy costs.

Using VMware® vSphere™ 4.0 virtualization software, Affiliated was able to complete the server consolidation and upgrade key and install new applications – including Microsoft Exchange 2007, Microsoft Office Communication Server, Microsoft Office 2007 Enterprise Edition, and Citrix® XenApp™ 5.0 – without any downtime. “That was important to us—we couldn’t afford to shut down the network, even briefly,” Schaar recalls.

Reliability equals peace of mind

From virtualized servers and built-in disaster recovery to much improved network reliability and scalability, the Affiliated solution has delivered true peace of mind. “Before, we were always concerned that if we lost our network, it could cost us more than \$56,000 a day in unproductive wages. It’s a huge relief to reduce that risk,” he says.

With the addition of the powerful HP servers, Kenda USA has upgraded to a more stable Citrix environment. Along with updated email, active directory, databases and a planned Sage MAS 200 ERP implementation, Kenda also added voice and video conferencing capabilities. Geographically-dispersed employees now hold virtual meetings and collaborate in real-time, saving on travel expenses.

Finally, Affiliated helped Kenda USA save on future licensing costs by upgrading the network with Microsoft Software Assurance. This comprehensive maintenance offering will allow Kenda USA to automatically upgrade any of its Microsoft products over the next three years without any additional licensing costs. “This represents a substantial cost savings that allows us to stay current with our Microsoft licensing for years to come,” Schaar says. “It also means we won’t fall short again with licensing as our business grows.”

About Affiliated

Affiliated helps growing and mid-market organizations identify, evaluate and implement technological solutions to improve operational efficiency or increase revenue. Since 1993, Affiliated has assisted hundreds of organizations across many industries to extract greater value from new and existing technology and resources. Affiliated is a 2007 and 2008 Microsoft U.S. Central Region Partner of the Year in Customer Satisfaction and Business Transformation, respectively.

“Affiliated was very proactive in assessing our future needs, and because of that approach, I think they will save us tremendously in time, effort and money in the long run.”

- Steve Schaar, Information Technology Manager, Kenda USA

Learn more about how Affiliated can benefit your business.

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