Prudential Realty

Prudential Carolinas Realty has been on the cutting-edge of real estate since its inception in 1974 as Helms-Parrish Properties. The company began as a collaboration between Robert Helms, the current President & CEO, and Mary Ann Parrish, an established icon of the real estate industry with over 50 years of experience. The company was affiliated with Merrill-Lynch for a number of years until 1989 when it became Prudential Carolinas Realty. The company has steadily increased in size, expanding to 900 employees, 18 branch offices.

Prudential Real Estate has pioneered use of the most advanced tools in the industry to create solutions for their customers' home selling and buying needs. Prudential Carolinas Realty agents rely on sophisticated technological tools to provide efficient services for their customers. Agents are able to provide virtual tours by computer of selected properties and use specific internet-based home selling and finding tools and techniques. Prudential Carolinas Realty continually searches for ways to simplify real estate matters and improve customer service through the use of technology.

Challenge

Growth of Prudential Carolinas Realty and its expanding reliance upon computer-based information made it necessary to upgrade the company's computer network. Originally, the company used a frame relay wide area network to connect their 18 branch offices in the Carolina area. This network used Citrix software (a program that allows simultaneous access by users to applications running on the server) for centralized management of their applications such as Microsoft Word and Publisher.

Network demand soon over tasked the existing system, so Prudential Carolinas Realty upgraded the network with T1 connections between the 18 offices and established a Virtual Private Network (VPN) with Cisco's PIX firewall. This configuration gives Prudential Carolinas Realty a fast, reliable, and secure network.

In the course of the upgrade, administrators created user accounts for each of the 900 employees. Along with the account, a home folder and a private folder were created and mapped through the VPN on the company's main file server allowing employees to access files on the server from any of the 18 branch locations. To improve productivity, each employee's workstation has an individually licensed copy of application software. According to Robert Milton, Network Administrator for Prudential Carolinas Realty, "We finally had our network functioning just the way we wanted. The T1's were less expensive and faster than the framed network and the software applications installed on the user's desktop functioned better."

Network improvements increased the ability of realtors to perform their usual functions of creating marketing flyers for properties as they came on the market. Developing this marketing information requires the presence of the realtor on-site to photograph the home or building and write accurate descriptions from direct observation. Much of this work is necessarily performed away from the office. Striving to be more efficient, realtors started asking Robert for remote access to the network because they needed the same access to folders they had while at the office.

Creating remote access permissions for 900 employees presented another problem that had to be addressed. Coupled with the access permissions is a need limit total access to the server. Disk space for each user must be specified and bandwidth quota must be set. Robert needed a tool to make the 'permission' problem manageable.

Solution

GlobalSCAPE's Secure File Servers was the winner among the different software solutions Robert examined. The FTP service for Microsoft's IIS didn't have the security features he needed. After an Internet search for FTP servers, Robert selected GlobalSCAPE's Secure File Servers because he liked the feature set, remote administration capabilities and the price. Robert felt the most important aspects of GlobalSCAPE Secure File Server solutions for his network were:

- **Active Directory Support** You can create sites using an NT user authentication database so users can connect to the site using their NT user name and password. User setup is essentially hands-off because it automatically queries the Windows Primary Domain Controller (PDC) for the domain and adds all domain users. Active Directory user settings such as file and folder permissions, passwords, and access times are automatically respected. GlobalSCAPE FTP server takes this Active Directory user information and maps virtual drives located on the PIX Firewall VPN. Since GlobalSCAPE software is able to use the information in the Windows Active Directory accounts, it precludes the need to maintain separate Active Directory and FTP user accounts. This saves a tremendous amount of work when 900 employees are concerned.
- **Robust Virtual File System (VFS)** Virtual folders refer to an existing physical folder on the local computer or a remote computer on the network. A virtual folder name is only an alias for the real folder, so the contents of the virtual folder are the same as the physical folder. The VFS feature on GlobalSCAPE's Secure File Servers allows each user's home folders that reside on a different computer to be mapped to the server. This capability permits users to simply login and all of their documents are available to them at remote locations just as if they were working at their Prudential Carolinas Realty office.
- **Disk quota/bandwidth throttling** Controlling 900 users on a network can be a daunting task. Prudential Carolinas Realty needed to ensure remote users would not overtax the network. They wanted to place limits on how much disk space and bandwidth a person could use. GlobalSCAPE's Secure File Servers have granular user setting controls that can assign a finite amount of disk space and restrict bandwidth consumption. Settings can be applied to individual users or "setting levels" which organize a group of settings where users can be readily added or deleted. Robert is able to make these adjustments easily with the integrated user management functions.

These features allow multiple users to efficiently access important information over a secure connection and ensure conservation of network resources for all users.

Summary

GlobalSCAPE Secure File Servers protect your mission critical file transfers with state-of-the-art security and delivers enterprise-level performance at a desktop price. Used with CuteFTP Professional, a complete secure file management solution is provided that goes well beyond file transfers alone, automating common management tasks and initiating back-end processes; features typically only found in expensive electronic data interchange (EDI) and commerce systems. Industry leaders in banking, healthcare, technology and government, highly concerned with information security, are turning to GlobalSCAPE for a cost effective alternative that gets the job done, every time.

For more information

Contact our sales team for more information about GlobalSCAPE's Secure File Servers—Enhanced File Transfer Server and Secure FTP Server—and other GlobalSCAPE products.

GlobalSCAPE, Inc. stock is quoted on the OTC Bulletin Board under the symbol OTCBB: GSCP.

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