



KEESAL, YOUNG AND LOGAN

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“SINCE OUR PRACTICE WAS FOUNDED, IT’S BEEN OUR GOAL TO DELIVER THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF CLIENT SERVICE IN THE INDUSTRY. NOW THAT THE FIRM IS NETWORKED, WE’RE PROVIDING BETTER QUALITY TO OUR CLIENTS, CONTROLLING INTERNAL COSTS MORE EFFECTIVELY, AND I SEE SEVERAL AREAS THAT WILL IMPROVE WITH THE NEW TOOLS WE HAVE IN PLACE.”

—*Bob Logan, Senior Partner, Keesal, Young and Logan.*

Overview

Founded in 1970, Keesal, Young and Logan (KYL) is a highly respected law firm specializing in securities, employment, environmental, business, and maritime litigation. To further strengthen an already thriving and growing practice, the firm recently made the decision to install a local and wide area network to improve their business operations. With the help of two in-house employees and a computer networking industry Value Added Reseller (VAR), all five sites were networked, including the home office in Long Beach, California, and the offices in San Francisco, Seattle, Anchorage, and Hong Kong.

KYL has experienced considerable growth over the past few years, and currently has over 160 employees on the new network. Designed to support any level of expansion over time, the network was brought online in February, 1998 and is now an integral part of the way the firm operates. This article will explore the motivating factors for installing the network, and the benefits the firm has experienced since it was brought online.

Before the new network was installed, KYL was heavily reliant on inter-office memos, faxes, voicemail, and overnight delivery services, all of which limited the efficiency of business operations. When the decision was made to network the firm, a partial system was already in place at the main office, but the branch offices were not networked. High-performance networking services needed to be extended to include personnel at all of KYL’s offices. The firm was heavily reliant on centralized word processing services, and lawyers were not able to personally access and revise documents. In addition, the lack of a comprehensive network made the challenge of unifying and standardizing the appearance of their documents more complex. KYL decided to totally rebuild the network infrastructure, creating a robust architecture capable of meeting both present and future needs. Management decided that in order to operate more efficiently, provide better service to their clients, keep pace with competing law firms, and attract a higher caliber of employees, a strong and viable network needed to be created to unify the entire firm.

Streamlining the Way People Do Business

“I DON’T THINK THERE’S A LAWYER IN THE BUILDING WHO DOESN’T THINK THE NETWORK HAS MADE AN ENORMOUSLY POSITIVE IMPACT.”

—*Bill Collier, Senior Partner*



The network has delivered several key benefits to the operation of the business as a whole. Before the network was installed, the firm had a heavy reliance on interoffice memos, which were circulated throughout the firm as hard copy. Communication via e-mail is quicker and more efficient, and responses can be easily tracked. Since the network was brought online, interoffice memos have been reduced by as much as 70 percent, and voicemail has also been reduced by an estimated 50 to 75 percent. The implementation of new procedures across the company has been greatly simplified, and the result is a more tightly knit organization.

Legal Services

As the network has become a part of day-to-day business at KYL, several key benefits have emerged that have been particularly beneficial for the firm's attorneys.

E-mail. Without question, the primary benefit has been the enhanced communication made possible by the corporate e-mail system. Attorneys are now able to respond to queries in an immediate, concise manner, without having to reach heavily scheduled associates in real time. Whether a coworker or client is physically located in the same building, in another time zone, or traveling worldwide, key information can be easily and efficiently exchanged. The convenience of e-mail increases the attorney's ability to provide timely responses, cutting response times dramatically. E-mail offers a more precise method of communication, and is ideal for meeting the attorney's need for accuracy. And unlike voicemail, records of communication via e-mail are easily documented.

Bill Collier, Senior Partner of the maritime law division, has found it easier and more convenient to respond to questions from his associates since the network was installed. Although he had never used a PC, communicating via e-mail is now a key component of the way he conducts his practice.

"For me, the single biggest difference is the use of e-mail. Since the network was installed, it's been like night and day. I can provide direct, essentially immediate feedback, and I don't go a day without answering every e-mail. I have 12 attorneys in Long Beach and three branch offices reporting to me, and it was frustrating when I couldn't return their phone calls. Now we're handling everything via e-mail, and it's just fabulous—I'm probably answering 40 to 50 percent more questions than I was before. I've cut down on phone tag dramatically—I can provide answers right away, and I'm probably spending 25 percent less time on the

phone. Company-wide voice mail is down by almost 70 percent. E-mail is much more concise, and even our phone conversations are more focused because we're in regular contact."

Worldwide remote access. The network supports global remote access, enabling lawyers to provide better client service by dialing into the network from any location. Key information can be exchanged between remote locations in seconds, delivering a powerful competitive advantage through improved communication. As Bob Logan, Senior Partner at KYL remarked, "I was on the East Coast last month, and we had sent our client a draft of a two million dollar demand letter to an insurance company. The letter needed minor revisions, and the client was going out of town for two weeks so it had to be done by the next day. We had a laptop with us, and it was no problem to get into the system and revise the letter. My secretary cleaned it up a bit, we sent it out from Long Beach the same day, and it was on the client's desk the next morning."

Many of the attorneys at KYL also have high-speed ISDN links that enable them to dial into the network from home. In addition to sharply reducing the need for emergency trips to the office, Mr. Logan feels that telecommute access enables KYL to provide a higher level of client service. "Before the new system was installed, dialing into the network was slow. With the lightning-fast ISDN connection, I finally have a real virtual office at home. It's not almost as good—it's just like I'm at the office. I'm not a big fan of working at home, but when I'm getting ready for a trial, an arbitration, or if an emergency comes up, being fully connected through that Cisco router is really, really nice. It lets us provide an even higher level of client service, and that's what has always set KYL apart from other law firms."

Enhanced responsiveness. In addition, lawyers are using e-mail to take full advantage of the corporate resources that are available to them. If a certain lawyer needs help on an urgent matter, a request for assistance can be e-mailed in seconds, instead of wasting precious time on phone calls. Associates can respond without delay, and provide assistance in performing research, or drafting memos, letters, or briefs. Documents are verified and revised by the lawyer who requested the assistance, and then sent out to the client. Complete accuracy is assured, corporate responsiveness is dramatically increased, and *esprit de corps* is created through increased teamwork across the firm.

Internet access. The Internet provides access to extensive legal resources that are now available online, bringing the most current research materials right to the desktop. Searches can now be handled by an attorney in minutes, right from their desktop. In the securities litigation arena, the Internet has provided an additional tool by delivering access to earnings and stock performance charts and other key information. Ideal for conducting on-line research pertaining to specific cases, the Internet can also be used to gather information on potential clients, or even on opposing law firms or witnesses.

In addition, favorable witnesses can frequently be located through online research, a process that used to require more lengthy searches by private or corporate investigators. This increased self-reliance on the part of the attorneys has freed the firm's investigator to focus on sensitive tasks requiring more specialized skills. According to Stacey Myers Garrett, Partner Elect recently commented, "I use the Internet at least once a day. Recently, I needed to find a witness on an important case, and I was on the phone with one of our clients. We were discussing how we were going to find this person, and whether we would need to work with our investigator. In the length of time it took to discuss the matter, I had used the Internet to narrow the search to four people in the Memphis, Tennessee area with the same name. From there, it was a simple process of making a few phone calls, and we had our witness."

Document Management. Another important benefit of the network has been the centralization of document creation and storage for the entire firm. Documents are stored on a central server, even as they are developed and revised, eliminating confusion and possible time loss caused by multiple versions existing concurrently. This process also streamlines document storage and retrieval, empowering authorized individuals across the firm to gain immediate access to the documents they need.

When minor revisions are required, attorneys can easily access the most recent version of a document and make the edits themselves. In certain situations where help is not available, including last-minute edits to key briefs or filings, or when working after-hours, this aspect of the network is particularly valuable.

Minimizing review cycles between the attorney and the word processing department increases productivity, delivering more value per dollar spent to the client and making the firm more competitive. In an environment where administrative assistants can be a shared resource, directly empowering the attorney has translated into a more responsive organization.

Conversely, if complex edits need to be performed, the word processing department can provide quick turnaround, even if the attorney is conducting a trial at a remote location. Documents can easily be e-mailed to Long Beach from anywhere in the world, quickly returned via e-mail, and then printed at the remote location. This dramatically enhances the firm's responsiveness, and also sharply reduces the need for couriers and costly overnight mail.

Even though the network has only been in place since February, 1998, a significant increase in the overall quality of corporate documents has been noted by Bob Logan, Senior Partner at KYL. "The new approach has raised our standards. We're seeing better quality control, and a more consistent appearance to the documents created across the firm." New presentations can be modeled after successful examples that already exist in the firm's central document server, eliminating the need to create each presentation from scratch.

Accounting Department

Billing

"TO MY KNOWLEDGE, NONE OF OUR CLIENTS HAVE REQUESTED ONLINE ACCESS TO THEIR BILLING INFORMATION, BUT BEING SERVICE-ORIENTED, WE'D LIKE TO HAVE THOSE SYSTEMS IN PLACE. WE COULD TELL THEM 'HERE'S THE SITE, JUST LOG ON AND YOU'LL KNOW EXACTLY WHERE YOU ARE'. WHY NOT? I THINK IT WILL BE A GREAT SERVICE TO OFFER."

—Bob Logan, Senior Partner, KYL

Maximizing the efficiency of the invoicing process translates directly to increased cash flow for the firm. KYL has found their network to be particularly effective in streamlining the process of tracking and reporting attorney time to the accounting department for invoice generation.

In the past, the efficiency of timekeeping and invoice generation was encumbered by inter-office faxes and overnight mail deliveries between the branch offices and the central office in Long Beach. Data was re-keyed, and documents would have to cycle between the offices for approval before an invoice could be generated, lengthening the billing cycle.

The current process makes full use of the capabilities of the network by enabling attorneys or support staff to create and review prebills onsite at the branch office, and then electronically send the invoice and supporting data to the home office for final preparation and printing. A personally signed coversheet completes the invoice, maintaining the personal relationship between the client and the attorney. Online information retrieval capabilities gives both the accounting department and the attorneys immediate access to current information on each case, facilitating responses to client requests for information.

“BEFORE THE NETWORK WAS INSTALLED, THE CLIENT WOULD CONTACT THEIR ATTORNEY FOR THE STATUS OF A BILL, AND THE ATTORNEY WOULD REPLY ‘I’LL GET BACK TO YOU ON THAT’, AND CALL THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT. NOW OUR ATTORNEYS CAN PULL UP ANY INFORMATION ON THE LEGAL AND FINANCIAL STATUS OF A CASE THEY NEED, AND ANSWER THE CLIENT’S QUESTIONS WHILE THEY’RE STILL ON THE PHONE.”

—Marilyn Whitcomb, Executive Director

Word Processing Department

Extensive benefits have also been realized by the word processing group at KYL's central office in Long Beach. Closely linked to the benefits enjoyed by the attorneys, personnel in the word processing department are benefiting from the new network in the following ways:

- Centralized document server eliminates multiple versions of documents, which can lead to confusion and increased workloads.
- Printouts and hard copy revisions are minimized. Attorneys make fewer edits in hard copy, dramatically increasing the efficiency of the word processing department and reducing expenditures on interoffice overnight mail.
- Draft copy and detailed instructions from the attorney can be embedded directly into documents, revisions performed, and then returned via e-mail for final approval.
- Branch offices can use centralized word processing resources.
- The central office can offload jobs to branch offices, maintaining a more balanced departmental workload.
- Expert assistance can be extended from the central office to branch offices.
- A consistent look and feel exists in all documents across the company



Administrative Services

“NOW I CAN GET ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
IN MINUTES, NOT DAYS.”

—*Janice Jaco, Legal Secretary*

The network has created a number of positive changes for the firm’s administrative services department. Before the network was installed, there was a high volume of faxes and overnight mail deliveries between the firm’s five offices. In the new system, the centralized document server has shifted this traffic to e-mail and electronic revisions, reducing phone line costs and overnight mail expenses. Improved interoffice communications frees employees to focus on their jobs instead of being swamped with voicemail and paper, increasing departmental efficiency.

In addition, the purchasing department has also implemented processes that save time and money by ordering supplies over the Internet. Prices can be easily compared between the leading vendors of office supplies, and expenses tracked in accounting spreadsheets. Supplies are then shipped directly to the firm, with increased accuracy and less time spent answering phone calls from salesmen.

Creating the Network

For assistance in creating the network, Chris Hagmann, Director of Technology at KYL, selected Orange Coast Datacomm, a leading Value Added Reseller (VAR) in the area. Founded in 1990, Orange Coast Datacomm (OCD) specializes in network design and custom maintenance programs. During a series of meetings, Mr. Hagmann discussed KYL’s specific needs and offered design concepts, and a plan was developed with the help of a technical sales consultant at OCD, Bob Murphy.

Central issues surrounding the design included:

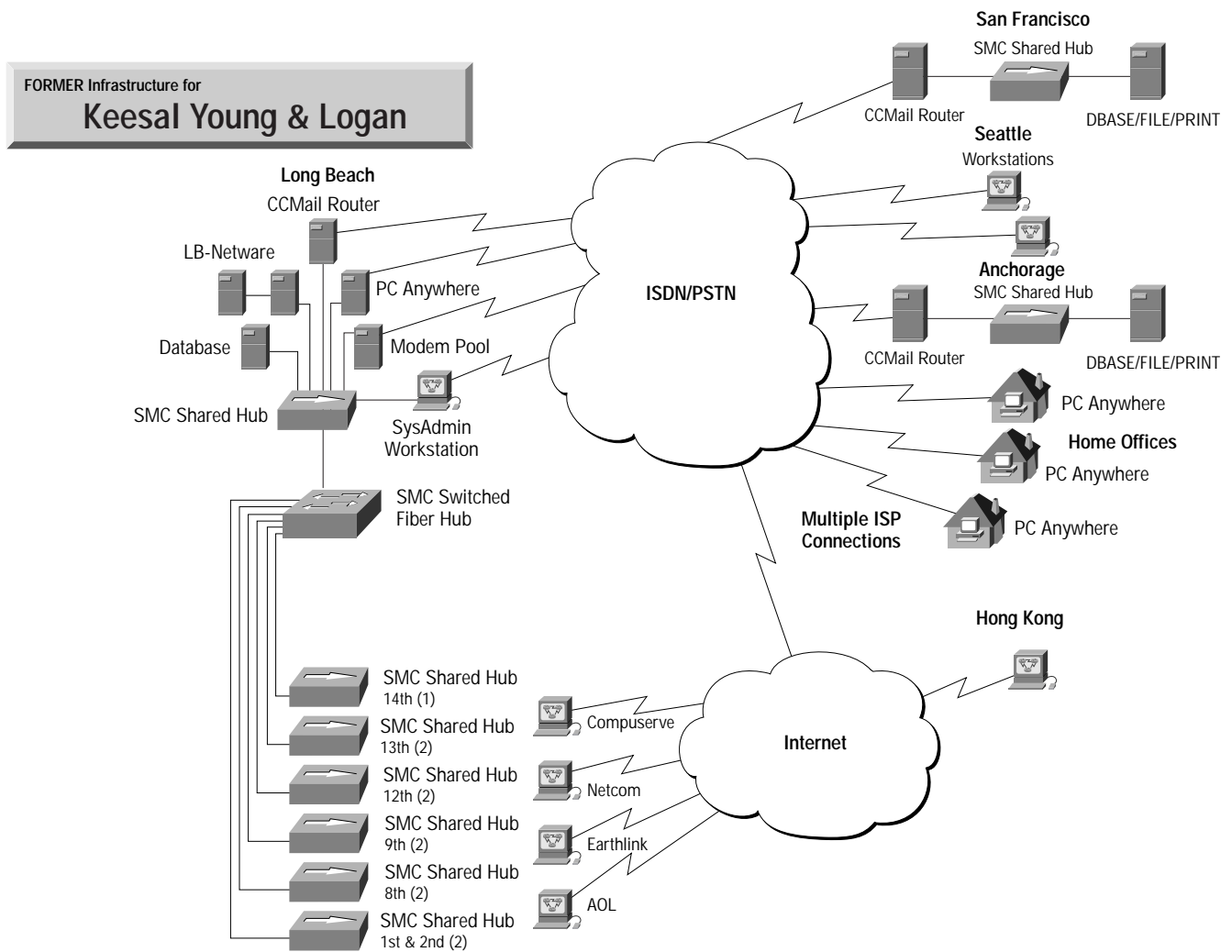
- Creating a robust network that would support both current and future needs.
- Selecting products that comply with industry standards.
- Assuring the security needed for transmitting confidential data.

Orange Coast Datacomm worked closely with Mr. Hagmann, providing installation engineers, handling equipment deliveries, and facilitating the cutover from the old network to the new one. OCD continues to ensure the success of the network by providing round-the-clock, 7x24 support services to ensure continuous operation. By working with a highly qualified VAR, KYL was able to proceed with complete confidence, knowing that resources were available to handle any contingency.

Most law firms do not have the budget or the need to hire personnel to build and maintain a network. Outsourcing these complex and critical tasks not only streamlined and simplified the installation process—it provided a cost-effective solution as well. By working closely with Orange Coast Datacomm instead of developing extensive resources internally, KYL was able to implement their entire program with only two people on staff.

The association with Orange Coast Datacomm freed Mr. Hagmann to pay close attention to KYL’s internal concerns, such as developing a user-friendly, comprehensive training program to ensure acceptance of the network. In the initial stages, several instructors were brought on-site to provide training to the firm’s personnel on a temporary basis. As proficiency increased, on-site support was gradually reduced.

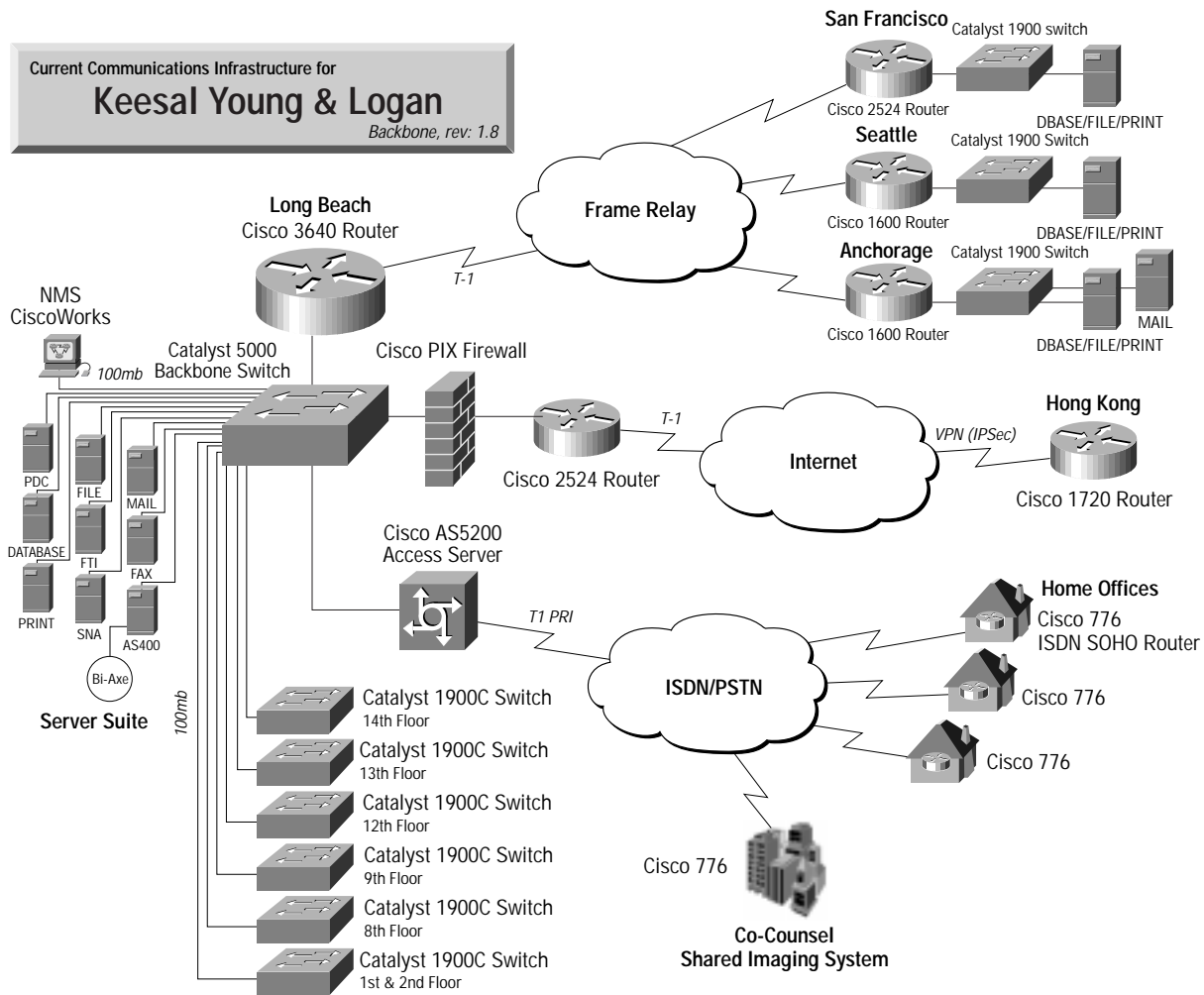
Figure 1 Former Communications Infrastructure



The existing network at KYL before the upgrade was a shared 10 Mbps Ethernet environment based on the Novell NetWare 3.11 operating system. Connectivity to users was supplied by SMC shared hubs, which in turn were concentrated by an SMC switched fiber hub. Links to the branch offices in San Francisco,

Seattle, and Anchorage were supported by a dial-up cc:mail router. Remote access was handled by PC Anywhere via an analog modem pool, and Internet connectivity was limited to individual 28.8 bps dial-up ISP accounts.

Figure 2 Current Communications Infrastructure



The new network environment is based on the Microsoft NT operating system. Extensive bandwidth is made available to each user by Cisco Catalyst® 1900C switches, which deliver dedicated 10 Mbps Ethernet connectivity to the Hewlett-Packard Net Vectra PCs. In the Long Beach office, 100 Mbps uplinks from the workgroup switches to the Cisco Catalyst 5000 backbone switch in the network center provide access to centralized resources in the server suite.

Connectivity to the branch offices in San Francisco, Seattle, and Anchorage is supplied by a Cisco 3640 router with a T1/Frame Relay link.

Internet connectivity for the entire Long Beach office is supplied by a Cisco 2524 high-density serial router with a T1 link, which also supports communications to the Hong Kong office over a virtual private network (VPN). Comprehensive, affordable security is provided by the Cisco PIX™ Firewall. And home office connectivity is delivered by a Cisco AS5200 access server, which supports switched ISDN connectivity to Cisco 776 dial-up access routers and modems in the remote user's homes, hotels, co-counsel offices, and courthouses.

“IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE MARKETPLACE, LAW FIRMS HAVE TO CONTINUALLY SEEK INCREASES IN PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH INCREASED INTERNAL EFFICIENCY. OUR GOAL IN CREATING THE NETWORK AT KEESAL, YOUNG AND LOGAN WAS TO MAXIMIZE PRODUCTIVITY BY IMPROVING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION, AND DELIVERING THE KEY TOOLS AN ATTORNEY NEEDS TO THE DESKTOP.”

—Chris Haggmann, Director of Technology, KYL

Future Capabilities

When planning the network, KYL was conscious of protecting their investment, and made a deliberate decision to purchase powerful, high-quality equipment that would not require replacement for years to come. The new network provides an open, standards-based architecture, and is capable of supporting new applications and technologies as needed.

Although widespread use of e-mail between the branch offices has helped to reduce long-distance phone bills, consideration is being given to adding voice and/or video capability to the network. Additional online research capabilities will also be added as they become available. To further improve internal communication at the firm, an intranet will be constructed to provide easier access to corporate newsletters and memos, as well as information on company policies and benefits.

One of the most significant changes planned for the network is the creation of an extranet to provide better client service. In the future, clients will be able to visit a secured Web site that will provide them with complete, up-to-date information on both the legal and financial status of their case. And if an existing client needs additional legal services, they will be able to browse profiles of each attorney, including information on success in recent trials and arbitration results in that area, and contact them directly instead of waiting for a referral.



Conclusion

By establishing the new network, KYL has seen several areas of where business operations have been streamlined and improved, including communication between the firm's personnel and an improvement in the delivery of service to their clients. Thanks to a combination of internal planning, training, and the assistance of Orange Coast Datacomm, the network deployment was carried out with minimal disruption. Network reliability has been maintained by selecting equipment from leading vendors, including workstations and servers from Hewlett-Packard and internetworking devices from Cisco Systems. Continuous, smooth operation of the network has ensured a broad-based level of acceptance of the system throughout the firm.

As a result of the improved communication delivered by the network, KYL is enjoying increased productivity from a more tightly knit company. And as the new system becomes a part of the way the firm conducts its business, an unexpected benefit has emerged. Morale has been increased, and the people who work at KYL are excited about the new personal capabilities and ways of working provided by the network.

"I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING THAT HAS GIVEN US A LARGER EMOTIONAL BOOST. I STARTED WITH NO PC EXPERIENCE, AND NOW I'M ON THE E-MAIL NONSTOP. IT'S MUCH MORE ENJOYABLE—I CAN GET BACK TO PEOPLE TEN TIMES FASTER THAN BEFORE, AND I HAVE MORE ENTHUSIASM ABOUT WHAT I'M DOING.

THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN PRODUCTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE GROUP OF ABOUT 30-40 PERCENT, AND A COLLECTIVE INTEREST HERE IN THE NEW SYSTEM, AND I THINK PEOPLE REALLY ENJOY THE WAY WE'RE COMMUNICATING.

ONCE YOU START EXCHANGING E-MAILS IT HELPS TO CEMENT THE RELATIONSHIP, ESPECIALLY COMPARED TO LEAVING A MESSAGE WITH A SECRETARY. THE E-MAIL SEEMS TO ALWAYS GET A RESPONSE, AND I THINK IT ALSO ASSISTS THE CLIENT RELATIONSHIP."

—Terry Ross, Senior Partner, KYL

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