

Fairchild Semiconductor powers business with Google Apps



At a Glance

What they wanted to do

- Avoid a major upgrade of an expensive and complex in-house email system

What they did

- Selected Google Apps for Business for its no-hassle, cloud-based model for email, document sharing, and range of collaborative features

What they achieved

- Established a scalable, inexpensive communication and collaboration hub for a global workforce that minimizes the burden on IT

Technology leader trusts Google Apps to handle communication and collaboration around the globe

Organization

Fairchild Semiconductor is one of the world leaders in delivering energy-efficient, easy-to-use, value-added solutions for power and mobile designs. The San Jose, Calif.-based company has eight manufacturing facilities in the U.S. and Asia, as well as 45 direct sales offices in 17 countries. With \$1.6 billion in 2010 revenue, Fairchild prides itself on connecting its 9,500 employees worldwide to foster innovative semiconductor solutions for power supplies, mobile devices, lighting, electric motors, computers, consumer electronics, and automobiles.

Challenge

Late 2008 was a benchmark time for many organizations. The economy was troubled and executives looked to IT to reduce technology budgets. At Fairchild, one of the cost-saving opportunities reviewed was the existing email system. The company's licenses were up for renewal, and users were ready for a change.

For more than a decade, Fairchild had used IBM's Lotus Notes platform for email and basic collaboration. Barry Driscoll, Senior Director of Enterprise Information Technology at Fairchild, and his team were faced with another major upgrade to the Notes platform. At the same time, Fairchild was struggling to implement an email archiving and e-discovery solution to address the legal department's needs to enforce email retention policies and improve litigation support. "We worked for almost two years and invested a lot of money to implement the email archive system, but it never fully worked," Driscoll stated. A new email system would have to be able to expire old emails while having an archive that could be searched for legal purposes. "It's very expensive for legal staff to have to comb through unnecessary data during discovery," he noted.

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—Barry Driscoll, Senior Director of Enterprise Information Technology
at Fairchild Semiconductor*

Fairchild also needed an email system with flexible access. For people working inside the company, the Notes solution was adequate, but for those who traveled or worked remotely, access to email was problematic. Employees either had to connect to the company's VPN, which could be unreliable, or use the alternative web-based Notes interface. "Of all the things we're responsible for in IT, the one we heard the most complaints about was [our] email system," Driscoll recalled.

Lastly, the company wanted a new messaging and collaboration system that would alleviate the burden on IT. Maintaining the email servers and storage

were not the only challenges. Avoiding the time and cost to upgrade the email platform every few years, including both the server and client components, was an attractive idea. Fairchild needed a low-cost, hosted service that would provide ongoing functional improvements and self-service capabilities to users.

Solution

Fairchild deployed Google Apps for Business in early 2009 to approximately 50 pilot users, including the senior executives. One month later, after a successful pilot, the full executive team supported the move to Google Apps and agreed to abandon Notes. "Once we got the OK to proceed, we migrated the entire population of 5,600 email users to Google Apps in 3 months," Driscoll noted.

"From 2009 onward, we've achieved hard cost savings of \$500,000 per year," Driscoll highlighted. He attributes this to elimination of software, hardware, and depreciation costs, and moving some members of the team to more strategic projects.

Today, more than 6,600 users access Google Apps from anywhere, without heavy IT support or high infrastructure costs. Most employees immediately take to Google Apps' email, contacts, calendar, and chat features. In addition, business teams collaborate regularly via Google Sites and Google Docs. In fact, Driscoll reported that more than 1,000 Google Sites and 50,000 Google Docs were created in a recent six-month period. Due to its ease of use, the IT group has been able to extend mobile access beyond BlackBerrys to iPhones and Androids. The wider device options have been very well received by employees. Fairchild also leverages the new capabilities of Google Apps that are regularly added, such as Google Groups and Google Voice.

Benefits

At Fairchild, Google Apps has had a tremendous impact outside of the hard-dollar savings. "The IT team has been able to dismantle legacy system infrastructure, including retiring more than 40 servers and reclaiming over four terabytes of storage," Driscoll pointed out. They've also been able to disconnect redundant WAN circuits used to support email and eliminate standalone spam filtering and email virus protection.

This infrastructure housecleaning has resulted in the reduction of the associated IT admin staff from five full-time employees to two. "And the remaining two are supporting more than just Google," he added. The move to a cloud-based service has helped Fairchild rethink its storage and workflow processes, leading to the disposal of obsolete email and documents as well as the creation of new and innovative business solutions.

For instance, Gmail and the Postini add-on support automated data retention policies, searches and indexing, allowing legal to carry out self-service queries for compliance and e-discovery. "We trained a paralegal to use Postini and now there is almost no IT involvement needed," he noted. The self-service nature of Google Apps has also been beneficial for groups that want to work together more effectively. For example, in the past, if users wanted to collectively mark up a document, they'd typically submit their changes via email or on paper to one person, which usually resulted in multiple edit cycles. Now, authorized users can each edit a document in real time. "Colleagues in Singapore, Korea, Malaysia, Europe and elsewhere in the world can all edit a shared Google Doc at their convenience, or in real time, without ever worrying that they have the wrong version. This capability reduces process time for things like budget forecasts and project reporting, resulting in real productivity gains," Driscoll stated.

About Google Apps for Business

Google Apps for Business offers simple, powerful communication and collaboration tools for enterprises of any size—all hosted by Google to streamline setup, minimize maintenance, and reduce IT costs. With Gmail, Google Calendar, and integrated IM, users can stay connected and work together with ease, even in private domains. And, using Google Docs, which includes word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation tools, they can share files and collaborate in real-time, keeping versions organized and available wherever and whenever users work. Google Sites, Google Groups, and Google Video add further capabilities for Web publishing, secure sharing, and video storage and access.

For more information visit:

www.google.com/a

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Cross-functional global teams delight in creating and contributing to Google Sites. Users share content, links to outside references, schedules, notes, and other pertinent information with one another. Driscoll has observed the sales and product development groups taking full advantage of the service and has found it particularly gratifying because they can do so without assistance from IT. "Each of our business segment teams rely on Google Sites to collaborate on business strategies and opportunities globally. Our product development teams prefer Google Sites over other internal solutions to share project information easily," he noted.

Since it first was deployed in 2009, Google Apps has been delivering phenomenal results. Not only was IT able to avoid a major email system upgrade and heed the call for cost reductions, but Fairchild also has been able to offer users cutting-edge messaging and collaboration capabilities that drive innovation and sales.

