



Information Transformation



"It was a perfect scenario for us. Thin-client devices position our employees to provide integral support for our leading-edge e-business offerings. They make it possible for our employees to seamlessly process customer requests received electronically. If we didn't have these capabilities some customers wouldn't do business with us."

Jackie Barretta

Vice President of Information Services

Con-Way Transportation Services, Inc.

Con-Way Transportation Services, Inc., Portland, Oregon

When Con-Way Transportation Services, Inc. launched a website for customers in 1995, their employees could not access the up-to-date online information because they used out-of-date character-based terminals. To stay at the forefront of innovation in the transportation business, the company began a major technology upgrade to improve desktop access to new internal systems and improve customer service.

"Our old system put internal employees at a disadvantage," said Jackie Barretta, Vice President of Information Services at Con-Way. "Our customers had access to our Internet site to track shipments, obtain rate quotes, place shipment requests, etc. They would say, 'I'm looking at this transaction, can you help?' And all the service center could say was, 'Not really.'"

Con-Way is one of the nation's largest transportation companies with the fastest transit times in the business. Specializing in less-than-truck load (LTL) freight services, emergency expedite services, logistics, and air freight forwarding, a Con-Way dock is a beehive of activity and accuracy as they move more than 54,000 shipments per day for its customer base of 400,000.

Manage Access with Support

Customers have had access to shipping and tracking data from the Con-Way website since 1995, but employees using IBM 3151 character-based terminals could not even access the web. To provide top-notch service, employees needed to see what customers saw and in the same format quickly.

Solution Architecture

- Wyse Products:
 - Wyse® Winterm™ thin clients
- User Applications:
 - Custom-built, browser-based applications for customer relationship management, operational functions, and a safety system.
- Servers:
 - 36 application servers, 2 load balancing servers, Citrix® MetaFrame®, Windows® 2000, telnet 3270 with 3151 terminal emulation
- Network
 - 128K and 1024K

Con-Way had thrived using simple, easy-to-maintain, highly reliable "dumb terminals" at more than 425 service centers. The IT department was not about to deploy complicated PCs that would require hands-on updates, upgrades, and site-based training. The reengineering of information systems for access through a web browser resulted in the infrastructure to serve applications centrally as well.

A Better Solution: Wyse Winterm Thin Clients

Con-Way selected the Wyse® Winterm™ thin client for its easy access to the mainframe data and Windows®-based applications. Only the Wyse thin client had the TNT 3270 terminal emulation keyboard mapping necessary for a smooth transition. In addition, Con-Way required automated mechanisms to track and manage 5,000 IP addresses on their network. Wyse's engineers helped Con-Way write special code to resolve system software problems with downward compatibility.

At every site, Wyse Winterm terminals connect to a central data center in Portland where all applications reside and are processed on high-powered servers. When employees log-in from the desktop, they have access to the website as well as operations, finance, human resources, and customer service systems (rate quotes, shipment locations, delivery times, etc.). By improving the flow of information, the company has reduced transit times, improved customer relations, and can utilize applications for both external and internal access.

According to Barretta, "It was a perfect scenario for us. Thin-client devices position our employees to provide integral support for our leading-edge e-business offerings. They make it possible for our employees to seamlessly process customer requests received electronically. If we didn't have these capabilities some customers wouldn't do business with us."

Cost Avoidance

When the IT department compared the cost and reliability of thin clients with PCs, thin clients won hands down. According to Con-Way, the acquisition price of the thin client solution with servers was 28% less than a PC-based system, while the "one-to-one" replacement costs were 44% better. In addition, the reliability and estimated lifetime of thin clients meant a better return on investment with savings of 69% in help desk support, and 80% in technical administration savings over 5 years.

"The real savings were in cost avoidance," said Barretta. "We wanted to count on not having to touch and handle all those PCs, assemble support staff, and create support standards. With thin clients, we put the applications out on the server farm and don't have to worry about support."



Robust and Reliable

Con-Way deployed Wyse thin clients to service centers, maintenance shops and loading docks. The maintenance shops service, maintain, and track over 28,000 pieces of equipment. On the loading docks, thin clients are used to help track and speed the routing of shipments. The durability of the thin clients in these work environments is one of the greatest benefits to the organizations.

The user-friendly, Windows-based devices enable the company to roll out software updates and bring new employees up to speed with a minimum of training. Rather than training trainers from a central location, Con-Way provides computer-based training modules with quizzes for new applications. When employees access applications a page pops up with a new feature, user tips, and directions.

"You hear about the horror stories of these major upgrades and read about them in technology publications," says Barretta. "It's been amazingly smooth. We were expecting surprises that we didn't get."

Wyse Winterm thin clients helped Con-Way increase efficiency, reduce costs, and improve customer service while continuing to transport Con-Way to the competitive edge.

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