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GreenPages On-Demand Project Management Facilitates Active Directory Migration for 800 Users Across Seven Sites Globally

Munters

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KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Challenge

↗ Munters needed to migrate an Active Directory child domain, including seven different sites, into another existing child domain.

↗ This was a large project, including 800 computers, located at several locations across the globe.

↗ IT staff was extremely busy with project planning in addition to day-to-day responsibilities.

↗ As an international company, there were time zone and language challenges

Solution

↗ Munters utilized GreenPages' On-demand Project Management services.

↗ GreenPages' engineers helped with technical validation during the testing stage.

↗ GreenPages Project Management organized schedules, communications, resources, and kept the complex project on track.

Successful Results

↗ All of the migrations were completed successfully in stages, with a minimum of complications.

↗ Approximately 800 users were able to seamlessly access systems during and after the migration.

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Munters Corp.

Munters Corp. produces air-treatment equipment for industrial processes and indoor climate control. The company has worldwide operations, and is based in Sweden and Massachusetts.

Customer Challenge

Munters' network includes 800 computers, located in seven physical sites, including Virginia, Florida, Michigan, Texas, Massachusetts, Mexico, and Brazil. The LANs at these locations are connected via VPN, with each site set up as a separate child domain under Active Directory (AD).

Munters wanted to improve its AD configuration by moving one child domain, including seven different sites, into another existing child domain. This would make the network easier to manage and provide a good foundation for later expansion.

Munters needed to perform the cutover over several weeks—so the coordination was phased and complex. While they had a team of engineers across the country focused on the technical work, Munters didn't have an internal person accountable for managing the people involved and ensuring project milestones were met.

"We knew the transfer process would be reasonably complex," explained Josh Currier, Munters Americas Network Manager. Eight hundred users would be directly affected by the AD migration. "Rather than have everything just came over as a copy, this project involved migrating from one child domain to another, so there was more room for duplication, and more opportunities for problems. Our biggest concern was that we not leave users in a state where they temporarily lost security rights or access to resources that they needed. There was some potential for catastrophe here."

Solution: GreenPages On-Demand Project Management

"Often IT professionals don't have the bandwidth or skills to handle a complex project of this size," said Jamey Beland, Project Manager. "They're already extremely busy just staying on top of their regular day-to-day work." Josh Currier agreed: "I'm personally responsible for managing a whole range of applications and my hands are full. We knew that if we could get help with the project management part of this it would be an enormous benefit."

Project Management Backed by Engineering Expertise

Munters began to discuss the project with GreenPages. "We already had a good relationship with GreenPages, so they were our first call," Currier said. He said it was reassuring to have backup from the engineering staff at GreenPages. "We had a plan, but wanted validation," he said. "The majority of the work went into the planning stage and we spent quite a bit of time on testing. To start, we set up a test lab and migrated one child domain. There were a lot of little issues that came up and GreenPages' engineering people helped us solve some of the hiccups."

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Timing & Communications Challenges

Because some of the sites were located across the U.S and outside the country, there were communications challenges posed by both time zone and language issues. The project was also complicated by a large traveling sales force and users working remotely from home laptops; all PCs had to be on the network in order to successfully achieve the migration.

"We had to create a detailed communication schedule with different instructions for many different kinds of users. And because many of the users were not fluent in English, we had to make sure all communications were carefully and accurately communicated," said Beland. "Then we had to time the communications, explaining to users weeks in advance that their credentials would be changing and giving them specific instructions. We also put everything on Google Docs, so everyone had the same, accurate information in real time."

Munters is a 24/7 manufacturing company so GreenPages had to plan around production and plant schedules, working evenings and weekends to accommodate different time zones and ensure project milestones were hit. "Jamey was reminding me what we needed to do next. If I didn't hear from him, I knew I was up to date," added Josh Currier.

There were also a few extenuating circumstances. For example, the accounting department at one of the locations as well as an HR executive management system required a modified migration process due to corporate policies. "I worked with those departments to determine the best approach to making sure the migration for these groups was completed successfully within the allocated window of time," added Beland.

Successful Result

Because of the careful preparation and GreenPages' project management, the entire AD migration project went smoothly, with a minimum of complication for Munters' IT staff. "Over the last 10 to 12 years, it's become very common for IT organizations to schedule on-demand project management for initiatives of this type," Beland said. "Only about a third of IT projects are completed on time, within budget, and meet all necessary technology parameters. On a complex project, you really need someone to be accountable, to be the 'coach' of the project. GreenPages helps clients by adding expertise in coordination, risk management, and change control. Project Management is a value-added service our clients continue to demand and it dovetails very well with our IT integration capabilities."

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