



## **SOUTHERN REHABILITATION NETWORK: CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY | 2009**

### **THE CUSTOMER**

**Southern Rehabilitation Network (SRN), Inc.** is a team of professionals providing medical and vocational restoration and managed care through a variety of services.

### **WHY THEY CAME TO ITS**

SRN was long overdue for a corporate upgrade to Microsoft Office 2007. However, because of their geographically diverse user base, these upgrades presented some unique challenges – and SRN decided to hire a team of independent professionals to manage and execute the project.

ITS was recommended to SRN by one of their business partners that also happened to be one of our existing clients. This is a common scenario for us – with satisfied customers being our most successful marketing tool.

### **WHAT HAPPENED**

The “short story” is that the MS Office upgrade was rolled out without a hitch - and exceeded all expectation for efficiency. In fact, ITS upgraded all 70 remote users successfully within a single day!

But this is only the beginning of the real story behind this project – because during the process of planning and execution, ITS discovered critical inconsistencies throughout SRN’s computing infrastructure that turned out to be the root cause of many ongoing, serious problems in their day-to-day operations.

First and foremost, due to poor design and implementation, the business’ core practice management application was fundamentally unstable and the cause of seemingly endless support calls. Database replication and functionality were inadequate and unplanned system outages were unacceptably common.

It was also evident that SRN’s application vendor had taken on a number of other IT projects for which they were under-qualified: VPN, wireless and network access were implemented using consumer grade solutions; operating systems, Exchange and SQL were out of date, unsupported and in various states of disrepair; and backups were missing or non-existent. Application outages were frequent.

Perhaps worst of all - with so many temporary band-aids applied to the environment, the support situation was unsustainable. SRN’s application vendor was on-site almost full-time, at great and ultimately unnecessary expense – while the in-house IT staff was overstressed and underwater just trying to keep things (barely) operational.

This was truly a case where badly planned projects and poorly understood and executed technologies were limiting the success of the business.

*continued*



## REENGINEERING @ SRN

SRN's user base consists of health care professionals - not IT engineers - so it was of paramount importance for any reengineering effort to be built around the core values of stability, supportability and usability.

Our plan of action included the following:

- Retire systems that were beyond their warranty and usable lifecycle
- Repurpose lower end systems to more appropriate (lower workload) tasks
- Design a Virtualization plan (VMWare) with Shared Storage (EMC SAN)
- Upgrade the Microsoft Environment to current, supported versions (Active Directory, Exchange, SQL)
- Adopt Microsoft Windows DataCenter Edition for more cost-effective Windows Server Licensing
- Implement Tier 1 networking solutions (VPN, Wireless, Firewall, Switches, SPAM)
- Enable reliable remote computing through the use of VPN, Terminal Services, 3G Data Wireless and VoIP Telephony
- Implement a robust and reliable backup architecture that meets HIPAA requirements
- Relocate high-priority systems to a co-location data center with resilient power and Internet access
- Research and recommend new telecommunications options to increase performance and lower costs
- Streamline and stabilize the core practice management application

## BANG FOR THE BUCK

Projects of this scope are not without costs. But through good planning and efficient execution, we significantly reduced the long-term TCO of the IT infrastructure and thereby made the cost-benefit ratio of the project compelling. By adopting more efficient technologies and restructuring IT vendor services, overhead expenses were reduced or eliminated and overall project costs met all customer expectations.

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

The positive change enabled by these technological improvements has been impressive. It has changed the way people work.

**From an operational point of view**, the staff is much more efficient – and therefore much happier. They accomplish their work without worry and without drama. IT staff have seen a reduction in support ticket volume of approximately 90%. Application upgrades are planned without apprehension and executed smoothly.

*continued*



**From a financial point of view**, dependence on the 3rd party application vendor has been significantly reduced, with a correspondingly large cost savings every year. In addition, revenue can now be booked and clients can be billed more efficiently (not only when the application feels like cooperating!). Cash flow is now cash flow, not cash-in-fits-and-starts.

**From a technological point of view**, the entire environment is now flexible, redundant, scalable and supportable. New virtual machines can be added easily and without extra licensing costs. Upgrades to the main practice management application can now be done on 4 servers in an hour, instead of on 70 laptops over the space of a week or more. Most importantly... stuff just works... and it works well.

**And, from a business point of view**, because improvements in the IT infrastructure have enabled work to be delivered more consistently and efficiently, SRN's clients are now more satisfied than ever.

## CUSTOMER COMMENTS

"We'd always been reticent to work with 3rd parties because they seemed so dialed in to making us work their way. ITS worked for us to achieve our goals. They didn't try to sell us anything we didn't need or want and, given the headaches we'd had in the past, it was all remarkably painless. They just 'did the right thing', whatever that happened to be at the time."

**Shari McCalister | SRN VP of Operations**

"One thing we loved in particular is that ITS is almost old fashioned in the way they treated us. We never once heard the term 'partnership' or some other spin like 'synergistic relationship'. ITS never forgot that we are their customer, not their partner or best friend. They worked with us and for us - and knowing that they were doing the right thing for us and not simply trying to improve their own revenue stream is priceless."

**Jane Rouse, RN, MS, CRC, CCM, CDMS, LPC | President**

## TECHNOLOGY SUMMARY

- VMWare: ESX, vCenter
- EMC SAN: Clariion AX4
- Dell PowerEdge Servers
- Microsoft Windows Server 2008 Data Center Edition
- Microsoft Exchange 2007
- Microsoft SQL 2005
- Microsoft Terminal Server 2008
- Cisco Networking: ASA Firewall/VPN, Catalyst L2/L3 Switches, Aironet Wireless
- Symantec Anti-Virus
- Backups: Symantec BackupExec, i365 off-site

## ITS

2205 Candun Drive  
Suite E  
Apex, NC 27523

919 674 0044  
800 569 7109  
info@itsco.com  
itsco.com