

TITLE AND ESCROW SERVICE FIRM

By Mark Nelson

A RELIABLE, STABLE NEW IT INFRASTRUCTURE HELPS A NEWLY DIVESTED FIRM SET SAIL ON ITS OWN—AND SET NEW STANDARDS FOR ITS INDUSTRY.

Preparing to become an independent company, the client needed both a short-term support structure and a longer-term IT strategy and architecture designed around its business needs. With support from West Monroe Partners, the new company accomplished both—in just seven weeks.

THE CLIENT.

The client performs a full range of title and escrow services for firms involved in complex, single, and multisite commercial, industrial, and residential real estate transactions in North America and other jurisdictions.

The firm provides owners and lenders with all forms of title insurance policies and coverages, and it manages a wide range of escrow functions for single- and multi-site projects, residential condominium conversions, commercial and industrial projects, and construction escrows. The organization strives to set new standards in the title insurance industry by emphasizing service, expertise, and technology.

PREPARING TO BECOME AN INDEPENDENT COMPANY.

In 2005, several real estate entrepreneurs purchased the organization, which had been a division of another entity. Soon to be an independent company, the firm would not have access to the IT administrative or support staff that had been provided by its parent. Furthermore, certain online technologies that supported its business also would cease to be available. Not only did the newly independent company need to take quick steps to establish a support team to provide Managed Services for its technology infrastructure, it needed to reestablish vital technology in the short term and prepare for the migration of data, hardware, and user desktops. At the same time, the firm wanted to create an IT road map and environment that would support its mission to set new standards through service, expertise, and technology.

FLEXIBLE SUPPORT. STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE.

The client sought a reliable technology partner that could:

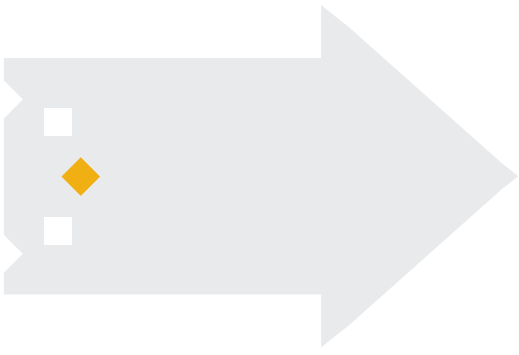
- ◆ Provide resources to maintain servers, networks, and desktops, as needed, on an outsourced basis.
- ◆ Prepare a longer-term technology strategy and architecture aligned with its business needs.
- ◆ Migrate the company's data, hardware, desktops, and other vital technology efficiently.

West Monroe Partners fulfilled all of these needs.

SHORT-TERM SUPPORT. LONG-TERM SOLUTION.

Working with West Monroe Partners, the firm established an immediate outsourcing arrangement for day-to-day IT support. Under this arrangement, West Monroe Partners handles routine tasks related to supporting and maintaining the company's networks and infrastructure. And, while the arrangement is focused on infrastructure, West Monroe Partners' breadth and flexibility have come into play on occasion, including rapid deployment of an application developer when the client needed to resolve Lotus Notes application issues.

With the opportunity to establish a new technology infrastructure from the ground up, the firm also turned to West Monroe Partners for assistance in developing an IT strategy for its future. Due to the confidential and high-profile nature of the firm's transactions, a top priority was establishing a stable, reliable, and standardized network—one that employed current, fully-supported technologies and that minimized downtime.



MANAGED SERVICES SOLUTIONS

IT Assessment.

West Monroe Partners conducted a comprehensive IT assessment to determine the strengths and weaknesses in the company's current environment. This included diagramming and inventorying current networks, servers, applications, and back-up procedures; identifying current roles for each server; and locating administrator passwords for all servers, applications, and peripherals.

Design.

Based on the findings from its assessment, West Monroe Partners determined that a Microsoft Windows 2003 domain with Exchange 2003 would provide the firm with a more secure, manageable, and easy-to-use infrastructure. This design would include:

- ◆ Active Directory and Exchange implementation and migration off of Novell NDS.
- ◆ File and email migration.
- ◆ Centralized print queues.
- ◆ Desktops and laptops with a standardized image.
- ◆ A Sonicwall firewall and virtual private network for better and more consistent service.
- ◆ Implementation of a new Microsoft SQL server.

Implementation.

West Monroe Partners supported the client throughout the implementation process, including:

- ◆ Ordering all hardware, software, and equipment.
- ◆ Setting up and configuring all hardware and software.
- ◆ Testing the environment and migration process.
- ◆ Preparing people and environments for migration of more than 80 desktops.

- ◆ Migrating all users' email, shared files, local data, and directory accounts to the new environment. This included visits to each desktop for configuration and testing. West Monroe Partners involved the company's IT staff in this process, so that it would be able to provide support for the new environment.

Ongoing Support

After the new infrastructure was implemented successfully, West Monroe Partners worked with the client to set up an ongoing support relationship through which West Monroe Partners staff would provide proactive maintenance for the environment, emergency break-fix support, and help desk services to support the entire new IT infrastructure.

FROM INITIAL ASSESSMENT TO NEW INFRASTRUCTURE IN JUST SEVEN WEEKS.

Responding to the firm's urgent needs as it prepared to separate from its former parent, West Monroe Partners worked quickly—establishing the new infrastructure in seven weeks. In addition to creating a stable, reliable environment, the client has realized other benefits — including various efficiencies and cost benefits. For example, users now can access email, calendars and tasks internally and externally in a single application: Microsoft Outlook. User activities have been significantly simplified through the move to a single sign-on. And, with a new standardized desktop, the firm is able to add and establish new users with minimal effort.

West Monroe Partners is an international, full-service business and technology consulting firm focused on guiding organizations through projects that fundamentally transform their business. With the experience to create the most ambitious visions as well as the skills to implement the smallest details of our clients' most critical projects, West Monroe Partners is a proven provider of growth and efficiency to large enterprises, as well as more nimble middle-market organizations. Our more than 300 consulting professionals drive better business results by harnessing our collective experience across a range of industries, serving clients out of offices across the United States and Canada.