



## **Internet Technology Helps Small Business Compete Efficiently**

By Judith Stolpner

What used to be a trend is now a recognized business necessity as more and more companies take advantage of the Internet because they see how web-based solutions can streamline their business while helping them save time and money. Today, Internet technology helps small companies compete with Fortune 500 companies as they build eBusiness Infrastructure.

Companies no longer need to invest in in-house IT infrastructure to support packaged software and hardware to install and maintain. With just Internet access and a web browser, web-based solutions can offer integrated business tools like Document Management, Content Management, Customer Relations Management, Sales & Marketing Management, Enterprise Phone systems that automate business operations no matter what that business is. One example of a small company utilizing the power of the Internet successfully is Olympic Moving and Storage. The company has two locations. One is in MA and another in VA. The company has realized significant increases in business by adopting an Internet-based business infrastructure. Before implementing web-based solutions, the company's two locations were completely separated with no direct connection between the two. The company first implemented a VPN (virtual private network). Basically a VPN is a private network that uses a public network (usually the Internet) to connect remote sites or users together. With the VPN installed, Olympic Moving now has the ability to maintain fast, secure and reliable communications between the two locations. Implementing the VPN has essentially put the MA and VA offices under one roof.

Another web based solution Olympic implemented was an online quote management system that provides quoting and lead management information and is designed to manage and organize the quotes the company generates through their website forms, and the requests entered by office staff through the website. Using this online application allows Olympic to respond to quote requests with an easy to use interface, search for quotes and allows multiple people to send quotes at once. These applications often times provide pricing information on exact and similar moves from past data, and includes custom HTML emails that can be sent to their past and current client list, making this particular application a very low

cost, simple marketing tool. Any employee from Olympic Moving and Storage, if they have access to the program, can use it to conduct business from any Internet-connected PC, any time, any where. This online application requires no IT/Database Admin overhead, no Software/Hardware investment and no upfront costs.

One of the most exciting and cost saving Internet based applications adopted by Olympic Moving is their VoIP (voice over internet protocol) based phone system. By installing a high quality, digital T1 based VoIP phone system, the company is saving hundreds of dollars a month in phone bills. In addition, before they adopted the VoIP system, they had two separate phone systems, one for each location. Now, only having one system for both locations has allowed calls to be handled by one office, saving time and money that can be better used for other integral business applications. And since the phone system is also Internet-based it integrates seamlessly with other applications.

When asked where he saw the most benefits of implementing these online solutions, Michael Gilmartin, President of Olympic Moving and Storage had this to say, "All the internet-based applications that Blue Robin Inc implemented for us are working very well together and our business is running much smoother and we have been able to realize significant savings. For example, before adopting the VoIP system, Olympic Moving & Storage used to have multiple vendors handling our traditional in-house PBX-based, multi-vendor phone system. We had to allocate a significant amount of resources to manage and pay for each of these vendors separately. Now we have shifted all these resources elsewhere and have gained an enormous amount of efficiency. The efficiency that we now have ensures our clients get the quickest most accurate information to facilitate their moving experience. That is the most noticeable benefit, and to us, the most important. The network between the two locations has made us much more integrated. We can now operate our business quicker and with more accuracy and efficiency. Now both locations are on the "same page".

"Our company Web site is the heart beat of our business. We have incorporated a Content Management System on our Web site that allows us to provide our web visitors the most up-to-date information. Our business data on our web site is always changing. With the CMS, we can make changes any time, from any PC, on-the-fly and without having to hire a web master. That alone saves us a lot of money each year. Using the web as single application architecture has been the right IT decision for us", continues Michael Gilmarten.

Utilizing the Web as the Single Application Architecture addresses the biggest problem facing organizations today -- how to integrate separate business processes and move data between them quickly and efficiently using the web. Single application architecture seamlessly integrates multiple functions and is the

software technology of the future business environment. These applications can be deployed and improved more rapidly than licensed software, speeding the delivery of innovation to the user. Additionally, Web-based applications are more reliable than packaged software that is licensed and maintained internally as they are scalable and lead to more efficiency and lower costs.

*About Ms. Judith Stolpner:*

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