WOODS | AITKEN

Woods Aitken Attorneys Stay Productive Nonstop in the Office and Remotely with Nutanix

Flexible Infrastructure Enables an IT Staff of One to Support Nationwide Legal Services

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Since 1921, Woods Aitken has focused its practice of law on achieving long-term client success on local, regional, and national levels. To help its attorneys support their litigation and other activities, Woods Aitken relies on its document management applications that run on its network infrastructure. However, as the firm grew, its network became more complex and difficult to manage. Woods Aitken migrated to a Nutanix hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI) to simplify management and provide a more dependable foundation for its legal team. When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, the platform enabled the firm to switch its employees to long-term remote networking, quickly and easily. With Nutanix in place, Woods Aitken is confident that its attorneys will always have dependable access to the tools and resources they need, anywhere.

> "Our lawyers are always trying to do things better and be more productive. If I'm not doing things efficiently, every dollar I spend is coming right out of our firm's pocket. I can't attribute any downtime to the Nutanix system over the past four years that it has been up and running. It has been bulletproof. That's about as good a praise as I can give any system."
>
> – Chad Mawson, IT Manager, Woods Aitken LLP

INDUSTRY
Legal

BENEFITS
- Flexible hyperconverged infrastructure enabled attorneys to reach the resources they needed working from any location

- One-click management via single pane of glass freed small IT team to focus on more strategic projects

- Flexible solution simplified move to remote networking during COVID-19 pandemic, and offered customization to meet specific client needs

SOLUTION
- Nutanix Cloud Platform

- Nutanix AHV Acropolis

- Nutanix Prism management solution

APPLICATIONS
- Worldox document management

- Office productivity applications

NUTANIX.

CHALLENGE

With offices in Denver Colorado, Washington, D.C., Omaha, and Lincoln, Nebraska Woods Aitken offers a vast array of legal services for individuals and businesses. Its attorneys support clients with asset protection and recovery, construction, bankruptcy, business, banking, labor & employment, telecommunications, estate planning, personal injury, commercial litigation, and many other legal services.

Client service is the hallmark of everything Woods Aitken does, and the firm relies on its network to provide support delivering superior legal solutions to clients.

"We had implemented a VMware solution when we first migrated away from individual standalone servers to virtualized systems. We did that, then did a forklift upgrade, stayed with VMware but went with newer hardware. We were running a separate SAN, servers, and network stack. It was getting complex."

"I'm the only full time IT person at our firm, and to be able to manage our previous system, I felt like I had to become an expert in how to run our SAN, servers, VMware, and networking environments," said Mawson. "We were reaching end of lifecycle for hardware, and we decided to look for something less complicated to run, and easier to expand."

SOLUTION

After considering several alternatives, Mawson concluded that a Nutanix hyperconverged infrastructure solution would work best for his firm. "I spoke with colleagues at the International Legal Technology Association (ILTA) and found several people who had implemented the solution and were happy with it," he said. "I also browsed numerous reviews and didn't see anyone who had had a negative experience with Nutanix."

Working with a beta version of the Nutanix Move utility, Mawson deployed the solution to support the firm's key primary locations and 65 users. "We got everything migrated over pretty painlessly," he said. "It didn't take a ton of my time, or nights and weekends. We got everything migrated over, and it was up and running."

Nutanix provides dependable performance for the firm's Worldox document management solution, an essential application that lets attorneys organize, control and access their data. "We have five individual servers running on Nutanix that support different pieces of the application. It was very cost effective, because I could simply spin up all the resources I needed to run the solution, without purchasing additional hardware. Worldox lets attorneys search any of the firm's documents from the past 20 years, and leverage information when we have similar cases today. We can provide access to the solution in our offices or for users working from home."

When the COVID-19 pandemic rolled across the U.S., Woods Aitken was able to smoothly transition many of its attorneys to work offsite. "We had to go from a small number of remote users to most of the firm connecting remotely," said Mawson. "It was very easy to go into Nutanix and modify the settings for more RAM, hard drive space, and other requirements. We simply spun up a few more VMs. From a budget standpoint it was painless, because we had all the resources we needed already in place."

NUTANIX

RESULTS

Nutanix solution together with the AHV hypervisor has simplified management of the Woods Aitken network, while reducing costs. "With AHV running on Nutanix, I can save money on licensing fees, and manage everything from one interface," said Mawson. "I've set up several VMs, and it's not that big a deal at all to make a change or update. It's great knowing that the complexity level is not there, and I don't have to worry about all the ins and outs of supporting separate SANs and systems."

With time-saving features like one-click upgrades, Nutanix helps Mawson save time on daily operations, and gain peace of mind knowing that his solution delivers consistent, always-on performance. "One thing I like about Nutanix is that it lets me run security patches, software updates, and other improvements without having to shut things down," said Mawson. "With Nutanix, everything is on one pane of glass, and the solution manages everything for you. It probably saves me two to three hours each time I do updates."

Trouble-free operation lets Mawson spend more time focusing on more strategic efforts, like moving employees to new offices. "Our Denver office moved into a bigger space, so it made sense for me to go out and help set things up in the new office. With Nutanix, I don't have to worry about staying at the main office to babysit the system. It just works."

Security is key for protecting clients' sensitive business and personal information, and Nutanix complements the firm's firewall and other security components to provide peace of mind. "When clients agree to work with us, they need to be assured that we are storing their data as securely as possible," said Mawson. "The system is as secure as any data storage system can be, and we like having the option to encrypt data at rest if it's needed. Even if we needed a whole separate system, we could spin up different VMs with different policies. Knowing we have that in our back pocket helps me sleep at night."

NEXT STEPS

Woods Aitken is always seeking to improve its services for attorneys and their clients and is evaluating additional Nutanix solutions to expand its capabilities. The company is considering adding the cloud-based Xi Leap Disaster Recovery solution to keep operations available if the company experiences an Internet outage or other issues. Mawson is also staying informed about the latest technologies and solutions by participating in the Nutanix User Group.

"The user group experience has been really good," said Mawson. "I can interact with people from a variety of firms, some of whom have with larger systems and more data. We are all looking at the issues we face from the same perspective, and the organization gives me a great way to compare notes with my peers."

New technologies and applications are emerging all the time, and Nutanix gives Woods Aitken the flexibility it needs to stay ahead of the curve and turn constant change into opportunities.

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