Integrated Solutions

The City of Aurora reaches a higher standard with leadership, technology and Compaq.

CHALLENGE

In April 1996, the City of Aurora, third-most populous city in Colorado, hired Rick Mapes to manage the newly established Client Services division of their Information Technology department.

Responsible for providing help desk services and desktop support for 2000 employees within 65 facilities and 17 major departments, Client Services took an inventory of the situation and quickly realized what an enormous challenge they faced. "We had approximately 900 desktops and laptops to support, of which there were 70 different makes and models that were purchased on a low-bid basis, a handful at a time, without concern for standardization, and there were 300 different software titles among them," Mapes said. "On top of that, we only had a staff of four: one help desk person and three technicians, who worked from the corners of my office, sitting on the floor."

"It was clear what we needed to do," Mapes said. In order to make Client Services and other offices more effective and efficient, he explained, they would need to standardize technology and implement a lifecycle management strategy across the board.

SOLUTIONS

Backed by overwhelming support from the city council and executive level management, Client Services contracted Compaq and they immediately set out in July 1996 to rebuild the City's IT environment together. Within just three years, the City was outfitted with 100% Compaq desktop systems.

"We chose commercial-grade desktop solutions and exclusively use Compaq *Deskpro*™ computers. The desktop PCs serve as portals to a range of programs and services, from the City's own tax and licensing application to its Geographic Information Systems," Mapes said. "This choice in Compaq desktops established a standard office infrastructure with limited complexity and has given us a tremendous advantage in reliability and performance."

The City also supports 60 Compaq servers that have improved the efficiency of its complex network infrastructure to respond to events

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quickly, eliminating downtime. These dependable and reliable machines host everything from the more routine applications, including file and printer sharing, e-mail, intranet access and Internet connectivity, to the more vital, mission-critical ones such as the City's new E-911 system. The City partnered with Positron to upgrade the system, which required high specifications of the PCs and servers that would run it. High-grade Compaq workstations and Compaq *ProLiant*™ servers were the answer.

The computer-aided dispatch for Police and Fire departments was recently replaced in partnership with PrinTrak using two Tandem servers and an array of *ProLiant* servers to assist in reporting and interfacing with other related systems. The project, completed on time and on budget, will soon provide mobile data to the City's patrol and other public safety vehicles.

The City has also developed an award-winning Geographical Information System, which prior to 1998 required UNIX® workstations to operate. "The cost of ownership was greatly reduced when migrating the product to a Windows NT®-based Compaq system, enabling us to deliver GIS-based solutions to more departments, like our Crime Analysis system for police investigations."

But the City's relationship with Compaq reaches beyond technology. Compaq's dedication to state and local government proved invaluable in a variety of ways, including a systems engineer who has been available to address issues specific to the City's IT environment.

"Compaq seems to be plugged into the local governments scene," Mapes continued. "Quite honestly, I feel spoiled by both my vendor and account representative, as they do what it takes to meet the City's needs first, doing all kinds of gymnastics behind the scenes to get it done."

The contract also includes an extended, four-year, same-day on-site warranty package with participation in the Compaq Self-Maintainer program, through which their department gets credit for maintaining Compaq equipment on their own. It's a time- and cost-saving program perfect for organizations that already have the resources to correct some system issues. The contract was also enhanced in 2000 when the City joined the Western States Contracting Alliance (WSCA) agreement, which gives its members additional benefits like greater purchasing power and best-price guarantees.

RESULTS

The efforts to transform a highly fragmented, understaffed information system into a robust and integrated IT environment has been a clear success with almost miraculous effects.

"Before, we had a reputation for slow response, often taking 30 days or more to attend to a problem," Mapes said. "Now, with just a few more people on staff, I'm happy to report that no issue takes more than three days to resolve and we find that 80% of cases are resolved the same day they are reported."

"This has allowed my staff to become more proactively involved with the specific business needs of the supported departments at the city," he continued. "The value gained is more than simple technical support, but true business process support that cannot feasibly be outsourced."

Client Services attributes a great deal of success to Compaq, not only for the quality products, services and support, but also for the dedication to its client now and in the future – throughout the technology lifecycle. "Compaq has been an excellent strategic partner, and I see that partnership as a long-term deal," Mapes said.

As one of the top-four system integrators in the world, Compaq provides state and local governments with a complete range of innovative products, world-class partnerships and industry-leading services to realize their e-government visions.

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