

The Leed Group

Company: Leed Group

Industry: Business Services

Business Need: A scalable, high performance data center infrastructure to support business flexibility and growth

Sitco Solution: Managed Virtual Servers Colocation and Internet services

Customer Overview

The Leed Group, a provider of fabric sampling services has played an important role in establishing connections between consumers and its customers for more than fifty years.

Centrally located in Evansville, Indiana, the company specializes in the creation of sampling solutions for furniture manufacturers, fabric wholesalers and wall-covering wholesalers.

Its fully integrated service offering includes product and graphic design, printing, bindery, packaging, distribution, artwork production, swatching production and asset management of a wide variety of sampling products. The company serves its customers with three offerings: tactile sampling products, web-based catalogs, and logistics services.

With the growth of the Internet, the company makes extensive use of digital tools and now interacts with the vast majority of its customers via the Web.

Business Challenge

Having embraced web-based delivery early on, The Leed group is an experienced user of IT infrastructure. Like many enterprises, the company owned and operated its own servers and applications. However in 2010, with its server infrastructure in need of a refresh and with power-related issues creating availability problems, the company decided to reevaluate its IT infrastructure options. Company CEO, Doug Edwards and CIO Dan Fleming decided that they needed to come up with an IT strategy that afforded them the flexibility and operational efficiency to support the future needs of their changing business.



"The virtualized solution from Sitco has given us tremendous flexibility and allows incremental growth – the flexible growth potential we now have prevents over or under investment and is a real benefit to our business",

Doug Edwards, CEO
The Leed Group

Solution Requirements

With more than 95 percent of their customers interacting via the Web and with extensive use of software tools for design, production, management and order fulfillment, The Leed Group wanted an IT infrastructure platform that offered high availability and reliable service.

Also ranking high on the list of requirements was sufficient architectural flexibility to allow optimization of its IT infrastructure resources and availability with the need of its business at any given point in time.

Finally, Leed wanted an IT platform that would allow the company to effectively and profitably exploit new business opportunities. In practical terms, this translated to an interest in solutions utilizing best-in-class IT infrastructure and practices as well as support for the significant storage and transactional loads of its enterprise applications.

Sitco Solution

The solution deployed to address The Leed Group's requirements combined Sitco's Colocation and Managed Virtual Server Data Center Services with Sitco Internet Services.

Working closely with The Leed Group, Sitco engineered a virtualized infrastructure housed in its state-of-the-art Evansville Data Center facility capable of supporting Leed's third party web application. The VMware based virtualized network also supports a SQL server database and hosts the software used by Leed to deliver graphic rendering, an important part of its eWeb service.

The Leed Group is able to monitor, manage, and support the virtualized network over a VPN running on a dedicated fiber link connecting the company's headquarters location to the Sitco Data Center. The link also supports internet connectivity for both the headquarters facility and a remote location, a short distance away in Lebanon, Indiana.

Solution Benefits

For The Leed Group, its working relationship with Sitco has brought a number of operational, financial, and strategic benefits. From an operational perspective, the Sitco solution gives Leed access to a modern Data Center environment, outfitted with current technology and utilizing best practices to assure the highest levels of availability and reliability.



"The biggest benefit of working with Sitco is their responsiveness. They take ownership of problems and never hesitate to help in any way they can",

Dan Fleming, CIO, The Leed Group

The combination of a highly optimized facility and a high level of customer service has translated to Leed being able to offer its customers better services with a much lower incidence of service interruption than was possible prior to their working with Sitco.

The second major benefit to The Leed Group is financial. By opting for a managed hosting service, the company was able to reduce its capital investment outlay, avoid vendor lock-in and establish a predictable expense profile for IT infrastructure services which it can match very tightly to business volumes and IT resource demands.

The final major benefit is strategic. With Sitco's Managed Hosting services, The Leed Group has ready access to IT resources and now enjoys greater flexibility in its use of those resources. With more room to grow, Leed is free to experiment with new business models, enhance functionality and offer its customers new or expanded capability while at the same time reducing the business and implementation risk associate with its growth initiatives.

Leed Group CEO Edwards and CIO Fleming both agree that the relationship with Sitco has been good for their business. Reflecting on the steady growth in their transactional volumes and storage requirements as well as the evolution of their network into a mission critical asset, they feel that they made the right decision to work with Sitco. The close collaboration and trust that has characterized the relationship between the companies has further reinforced their confidence in Sitco as a business partner well suited to supporting their current and future needs.

Bottom Line

Finding ways to meet the sampling needs of its customers has been a hallmark of The Leed Group for more than half a century. With growing demand for its online solutions, The Leed Group is intent on providing better service while increasing flexibility. With its Data Center infrastructure, Internet services and virtualization tools, Sitco is helping Leed to support sustainable growth. With Sitco, Leed is working to maintain its role as a key player in the relationship between consumers and its customers in the furniture, fabric wholesaling and wall covering industries.

For more information visit <http://www.sitcosolutions.com/>

