



## Case Study – Wickman Bennett Ltd

Wickman Bennett is a designer and manufacturer of high quality machine tools based in Coventry. As is typical with in-house organically grown IT systems, Wickman Bennett had a peer to peer network utilising a network attached hard drive (NAS). Backups were the responsibility of individual users and data was simply copied from one machine to another. E-mail was supplied via external POP3 mailboxes, and in order to facilitate use of mobile e-mail devices, e-mail was also forwarded to additional external accounts.

Wickman Bennett knew this to be an unsatisfactory architecture, the NAS was beginning to fail so they called in 4IT to discuss the implementation of a Microsoft Windows Server solution with centralised backup.

We performed an audit and quickly identified some unique issues. Although Wickman Bennett primarily used PC's, there were also a number of Apple Macintosh machines that were part of the business network. In tandem with the standard office type applications, they also ran a number of dedicated CAD stations running Solidworks.

Wickman Bennett also informed us that at some time in the future they may wish to upgrade their CAD system to a client/server based version and that any proposed solution should bear this in mind.

Our audit also discovered a number of incorrectly wired CAT5 ports, and a number of PCs running unsuitable 'home' versions of Windows.

### Recommendations

Our first recommendation was to rewire the identified CAT5e cable ports, ensuring leaving a few spare for future growth, and upgrade all PC's with 'Home' Windows versions to 'Professional' or 'Business' versions.

From the outset Wickman Bennett were keen to adopt a Windows server solution having already understood the benefits.

They wanted to be able to access business data such as e-mails remotely by both laptop and smartphone (e.g. Nokia running Symbian S60, Apple iPhone and RIM Blackberry) requiring Exchange server.

The most cost effective product was Windows Small Business Server 2003, however after extensive research by 4IT into the CAD package (including discussion with the software authors in the USA), it was discovered that, although the current CAD version was supported on SBS2003, the installation of the proposed future client/server version of their CAD system on to SBS2003 was not permitted. The CAD manufacturer required installation of the client/server version on to a basic Windows 2003 server.

Finally, although we do not support Apple Macintosh machines we were able to determine, from Microsoft, the fact that the Macs were interoperable with SBS2003 and obtained full instructions on how to achieve this.

Although there was a potential problem between SBS2003 and a possible future CAD upgrade, the additional cost of the various server components in non SBS form was prohibitively expensive. SBS2003 was still the most suitable choice for the current environment, any future CAD upgrades

could be handled by running an additional copy of Windows Server 2003 as a Virtual Machine utilising the free Microsoft Virtual Server R2. This would still be considerably cheaper than a full non SBS implementation.

Final configuration was Windows Small Business Server 2003 running on a Dell Server with 4GB RAM and Quad core processor. Exchange server (part of the SBS bundle) provides external access to e-mails via both Outlook Web Access and direct push to ActiveSync compatible handsets. Windows 2003 Server contains a VPN server permitting secured remote connections between the office and a remote laptop. The Server was also specified with an internal DAT72 tape backup device permitting automated central backup.

Installation was performed with minimal disruption to office staff effectively allowing business as usual.

### **Management & Maintenance**

As with all our SME's running Windows Server / Small Business Server we installed remote management to allow us to perform the day to day management tasks and respond rapidly to any server configuration requests or support issues.

We also perform quarterly maintenance functions on the infrastructure both remotely and via a quarterly site visit. This keeps the server in a healthy state and allows us to identify any issues before they become problems.

*"We found 4IT to be very professional and easy to work with, their understanding of what we really needed saved us not only time but money as well. An excellent company to do business with."* – Richard Martin, Purchasing Director, Wickman Bennett Ltd

*"This was a challenging project as we had to deal with both software (Solidworks) and hardware (Mac) outside of our specialities. It was extremely satisfying to see such a quick adoption by Wickman Bennett's users of the new functionality of push e-mail & remote VPN access"* – Mark Moran Director, 4IT Systems Ltd