



Customer: Heartland Technologies

Web Site:

<http://www.heartlandtechnologies.com>

Size: 80 employees

Country or Region: Iowa

Industry: IT Support

Profile

Heartland is a full-service IT provider offering hardware and software solutions, installation, end user training, and help desk support. With a focus on rural customers, they also offer agricultural products to help farmers become more efficient.

Software and Services

- OneNote 2010
- Co-authoring
- Word 2010
- Image editing

For more information about Microsoft Office, go to:
www.office.com

Midwestern IT Consultancy Works Together to Boost Productivity by 20%

"The consistency between applications makes it easier to stay up to date and to help customers with business issues."

Joddey Hicks, Account Manager, Heartland Technologies

From its headquarters in the Great Plains of Midwestern America, Heartland Technologies is a full-service IT provider offering hardware and software solutions, installations, end user training, and help desk support. With a focus on rural customers, they also offer agricultural products to help farmers achieve more efficient processes.

Heartland is the result of a 2002 merger of two companies, both of which were launched in 1985. Since the company's formation, its quick growth and expansion has resulted in the opening of five additional offices.

A Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, Heartland is renowned for utilizing the latest cutting-edge technologies to provide their customers with the most efficient, dependable service possible.

Situation

To accommodate the company's quick growth, Heartland has built vertical sales teams based in multiple locations throughout the country. Communication and collaboration challenges sometimes threatened to hinder performance goals.

Heartland relies on the creation of newsletters and marketing materials to connect with customers and build

credibility and brand recognition for their business. Producing this collateral requires input from multiple people, which was a time-consuming sequential process. To ensure professional results, they had to use a third-party application when adding graphics to these documents.

Solution

To improve communication with customers, reduce production costs, and increase sales, Heartland upgraded to the more sophisticated Office 2010.

Since deploying the new application suite, the company has experienced a significant improvement in productivity and efficiency through improved project collaboration and more intelligent image editing.

"The consistency between applications makes it easier to stay up to date and to

help customers with business issues," notes Jodley Hicks, account manager.

Working Together to Accomplish More

Due to time differences and scheduling conflicts, Heartland's vertical sales teams were rarely able to participate in real-time conference calls. They were already using OneNote as a more efficient means of sharing information, although they had some additional collaborative enhancements on their wish list.

With multiple people adding project notes frequently, it was sometimes difficult to pinpoint new information. And with the large volume of data, users were spending large amounts of time searching for the notes they needed.

With the new version of OneNote, sales teams have experienced more efficient collaboration with improved notebook navigation, allowing users to more easily organize and share information. Each project team can have their own folder, with color-coded author indicators and highlighting of new information. Intelligent page versioning makes it easier to review comments.

The new co-authoring feature in Office 2010 has further improved collaboration, allowing multiple authors to work on newsletters and marketing materials in tandem.

"Our workforce is spreading out more each year," says Hicks. "A project partner might be across the country instead of down the hall. Enhanced collaboration makes it easier for our sales teams to stay connected."

Combined, the One Note enhancements have saved up to 20% of the sales teams' time.

Creating a Better Image with Professional Graphics

Heartland creates dozens of fliers, presentations, and newsletters each month to attract new clients and foster current relationships. To ensure professional results, they used an expensive third-party design software to manipulate graphics before pasting them into Word. This extra step impeded efficiency and increased operating costs.

With the enhanced image editing in Word, users now have the capability to crop, resize, and add special effects to graphics within the native application, eliminating the need for the third-party software. "Word's new image editing functions have brought everything into the Microsoft realm," says Hicks.

The more efficient process has reduced the production time of each newsletter by at least two hours, saving three workdays each year.

Teaming up for Better Service

For Heartland, the biggest benefit of Windows 2010 is the capability to better serve their customers—not only by boosting the efficiency of their own internal processes, but also by helping customers leverage the power of 2010 themselves.

"With its many business-friendly and value-adding features, Office 2010 is much easier to sell to customers," says Hicks. "It easily demonstrates all the reasons they should upgrade."

Heartland expects that improved collaboration and image editing constitute just the beginning of the sweeping benefits their business will enjoy as a result of the upgrade.

"We've only scratched the surface of what these applications can do," says Hicks. "Every day we're discovering a new way to do our jobs better."