

IBM Network Station cuts construction costs at Shambaugh

Shambaugh & Son, a construction engineering firm based in Fort Wayne, Indiana, used to bring PC applications to terminal users the hard way... it transported a PC to users on a roll-about cart!

Today, however, accounts payable and other headquarters staffs at Shambaugh are accessing not only PC server applications, but also their usual AS/400 business applications and the Internet from a single desktop. All thanks to the flexible and affordable IBM Network Station network computer.

Saving time and money
Shambaugh & Son designs and builds electrical, mechanical and fire protection systems for large commercial buildings. "We do practically everything but the concrete and steel," says Kevin Dunn, Information Systems Manager at the company.

Apart from its headquarters, the company has offices in Indianapolis and Lafayette, Indiana, and branches in nine other cities in the U.S. It employs approximately 300 office personnel, and has a construction force of as many as 1,500 on-site workers.

The company helped to pioneer the "design/build" concept, where contractors participate in construction projects before the plans are drawn. According to Shambaugh, the early-start early-finish and prefabrication of major systems can cut from three to eight months from a project and save a significant amount of money.

Saving time and money are also key reasons why Shambaugh elected in 1996 to begin replacing terminals at its headquarters with IBM Network Station computers. Taking advantage of the Network Station's ability to access multiple servers simultaneously, the company was able to provide users with access to their primary AS/400 applications as well as to PC-based spreadsheet or word processing applications. "The Network Station makes people's jobs easier, without the cost or maintenance of a PC," Dunn says. "And if I see a way to save money and improve productivity, I have to do it."

Application	Simultaneous access to AS/400 and PC applications, and the Internet
Hardware	AS/400, IBM Network Station Series 100
Software	IBM Network Station Manager, AS/400 and PC-based applications





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*–Kevin Dunn,
Information Systems Manager
at Shambaugh.*

Dunn likes the Network Station’s low initial cost and low total cost of ownership. “The Network Station is centrally managed and has no mechanical parts, which means there’s nothing to break down. This results in very low support and maintenance costs,” he says. “I expect them to have a long life and low failure rate.”

Expanding users’ reach
With the Network Station, former green-screen terminal users now have the ability to access a variety of graphical PC-based and server applications along with terminal access. “Getting away from the green screen is a natural. It’s a dying technology. I need access to the Internet, graphical spreadsheets, word processing and easier e-mail,” Dunn says.

At present, the company has Network Stations in its two headquarters office buildings in Fort Wayne, connected to an IBM AS/400 9404 Model 310 server. For Windows applications, the company provides the Network Stations with access to an NT server. Eventually, the company also plans to place Network Stations in its remote offices in Indianapolis and Lafayette, and link them to the AS/400, as well.

Training costs on the Network Station were virtually nil, according to Dunn. “It took about half a day for people to get used to the new keyboard. That was about it, as far as re-training. The Network Station is very easy to use.” As for performance, Dunn sees no speed difference between 5250 emulation on the Network Station and a directly connected terminal.

Logging on to the Internet
The Network Station also provides an affordable and valuable way for Shambaugh to access information on the Internet. According to Dunn, the company often needs to check suppliers’ Internet sites for up-to-date product specifications and pricing. “Our purchasing manager used to wait until he went home to access his online service and get Internet information on things like pipes and fittings,” Dunn says. “With the Network Station he now goes online and gets this information immediately at his desk. Having information now instead of the next day could save us money and win us a job.”

According to Dunn, the bottom line for Shambaugh & Sons is simple: “The Network Station helps us work efficiently and delivers savings we can pass on to the customer. It allows us to deliver the best possible building at the least possible cost. And that’s a competitive advantage.”

For more information
To find out more about how network computing with the IBM Network Station and the IBM family of servers can help you make the most of your business opportunities, call 1 800 IBM-7080, priority code 6N7BK005, in North America. Outside North America, call 416 383-5152, priority code 6N7BK005. Or contact your IBM Business Partner or local IBM representative.

If you have access to the Internet you can find additional information via the World Wide Web at: <http://www.ibm.com/nc>.



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