

Legal Vertical Customer Profile—Keesal, Young and Logan

KEESAL, YOUNG & LOGAN A GROWING LAW FIRM WITH OFFICES IN FOUR NORTH AMERICAN CITIES AND HONG KONG, KEESAL, YOUNG AND LOGAN (KYL) NEEDED A COST-EFFECTIVE WAY FOR EMPLOYEES TO COMMUNICATE AND SHARE RESOURCES. BY LINKING ITS FIVE OFFICES TOGETHER WITH A CISCO LOCAL- AND WIDE-AREA NETWORK (LAN AND WAN), KYL IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY SIGNIFICANTLY, REDUCED COSTS AND POSITIONED ITSELF FOR FUTURE GROWTH.

Background

Founded in 1970, KYL is a highly respected law firm specializing in securities, employment, environmental, business and maritime litigation. The firm operates in five locations, with headquarters in Long Beach, California, and offices in San Francisco, Seattle, Anchorage, and Hong Kong. A limited LAN was in place at the Long Beach office, but the branch offices were not networked.

The Challenge

To serve its international clients, KYL needed robust communications between its five locations around the Pacific Rim, and the lack of an effective way to transmit data between offices was significantly hampering productivity and increasing costs. KYL depended heavily on interoffice memos, faxes, voicemail, and overnight delivery services, all of which limited the efficiency of the firm's business operations.

With the firm's centralized approach to word processing services, attorneys could not access and revise their own documents, and review cycles were often cumbersome and slow. Although some branch offices had their own word processing departments, there was no way to effectively balance the workload among the various offices to accommodate peaks in demand. And multiple versions of a document were often in circulation at the same time, causing confusion.

Dependence on the telephone made it difficult for attorneys to respond quickly to client needs. When attorneys needed answers to client queries, for example, they had to play "phone tag" with heavily scheduled associates. If the person with the answers happened to be traveling, the daily window for real-time conversation to resolve a client problem could be painfully short. In addition, slow dial-up connections to the headquarters office made it difficult to work effectively from remote locations.

The accounting department faced some of the biggest challenges. Timekeeping and invoice generation depended on interoffice faxes and overnight mail deliveries between the branch offices and the central accounting office in Long Beach. Data had to be re-keyed, introducing the possibility of errors, and documents had to be routed between offices for approval before an invoice could be generated, lengthening the billing cycle.

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Bill Collier

Senior Partner

Keesal, Young and Logan

<http://.kyl.com>

The Solution

KYL management realized that in order to operate more efficiently, provide better service to clients, keep pace with competing law firms and attract a higher caliber of employees, they needed to implement a reliable, secure, high-performance network infrastructure. They looked for a network that could support new, productivity-enhancing business applications and provide a platform for increased collaboration among attorneys and staff at the firm's five locations.

For assistance in creating the new network, KYL turned to Orange Coast Datacomm (OCD), a leading Cisco Systems value-added reseller based in Southern California. In addition to working with KYL to develop the network design, OCD provided installation engineers, handled equipment deliveries and facilitated the cutover from the old network to the new one.

The new network is based on routers and switches from Cisco Systems and on the Microsoft NT operating system. Cisco Catalyst® 1900C switches deliver dedicated 10 Mbps Ethernet connectivity to each desktop. These switches offer unmatched network configuration flexibility and scalability through embedded Cisco IOS® technologies, providing comprehensive management and security, bandwidth optimization, and even networked multimedia.

In the Long Beach office, 100 Mbps uplinks from the workgroup switches to a Cisco Catalyst 5000 backbone switch provide access to centralized server resources. The Catalyst 5000 series offers users high-speed trunking technologies, a redundant architecture, dynamic virtual LANs (VLANs), complete intranet services support, and a broad variety of interface modules to meet enterprise networking needs.

Connectivity to branch offices in San Francisco, Seattle, and Anchorage is supplied by a Cisco 3640 router with a T1/Frame Relay link. Internet connectivity for the entire Long Beach office is supplied by a Cisco 2524 high-density serial router with a T1 link, which also supports communications to the Hong Kong office over a virtual private network (VPN). A Cisco PIX™ Firewall provides comprehensive, affordable security, while a Cisco AS5200 access server supports switched ISDN connectivity to Cisco 776 dial-up access routers and modems in remote users' homes, hotels, co-counsel offices, and courthouses.

The Results

The Cisco network has transformed nearly every area of KYL's business operations and garnered rave reviews. "I don't think there's a lawyer in the building who doesn't think the network has made an enormously positive impact," reports Bill Collier, Senior Partner with KYL.

Even for attorneys like Collier who had never before used a PC, communicating via e-mail has become an essential business tool. "Since the network was installed, it's been like night and day. I have 12 attorneys reporting to me, and with e-mail I can provide direct, essentially immediate feedback. I've cut down on phone tag dramatically—I'm probably spending 25 percent less time on the phone—and even our phone conversations are more focused

because we're in regular e-mail contact," he said. Interoffice memos have been reduced by as much as 70 percent, and voice mail is down by 50 to 75 percent. The network also provides attorneys with fast, reliable remote access from anywhere in the world, allowing them to be more productive while on the road and more responsive to clients' needs.

KYL now also has high-speed Internet access, making extensive online legal resources available and bringing the most current research materials right to attorneys' desktops. Ideal for conducting online research pertaining to specific cases, the Internet can also be used to gather information on potential clients, or even on opposing law firms or witnesses.

Document management has been another area of dramatic improvement. Documents are now stored on a central server even as they are developed and revised, eliminating problems with "version control." Now, authorized users can immediately access the document they need, make edits directly in the file, route it for review, and email the final copy anywhere in the world for local printing. In addition, the network enables word processing jobs to be transferred easily between headquarters and the branch offices to balance work-load. As a result, the firm is more responsive to its clients and package delivery costs are down sharply.

The network has also maximized the efficiency of the invoicing process, which translates directly to increased cash flow for the firm. The biggest change is in streamlining the process of tracking and reporting attorney time to the accounting department for invoice generation. Online information retrieval capabilities give both the accounting department and the attorneys immediate access to current information on each case, making it easy to track costs.

"Before the network was installed, the client would contact their attorney for the status of a bill, and the attorney would reply 'I'll get back to you on that,' and call the accounting department," recalls Executive Director Marilyn Whitcomb. "Now our attorneys can pull up any information on the legal and financial status of a case they need, and answer the client's questions while they're still on the phone."

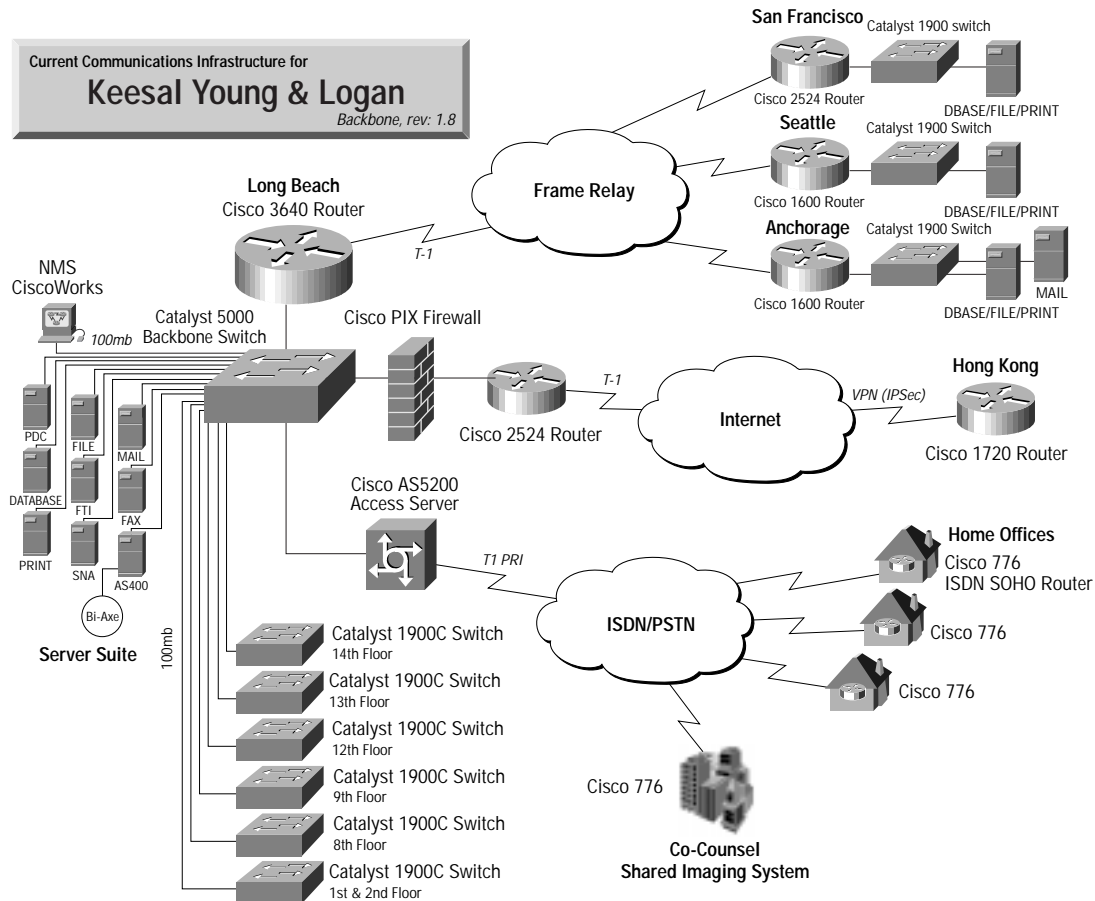
The new network provides an open, standards-based architecture, and is capable of supporting new applications and technologies as needed. Now that e-mail is firmly established as an indispensable productivity tool, the firm is considering adding voice and video applications to its network solution. They are also building an intranet—an internal Web site—to provide easier access to corporate news as well as policy and benefits

information. A planned extra- net will soon allow clients to visit a secured Web site to access complete, up-to-date information on both the legal and financial status of their cases.

Senior Partner Bob Logan is pleased. "Since our practice was founded, it's been our goal to deliver the highest levels of client service in the industry," he says. "Now that the firm is

networked, we're providing better quality to our clients, controlling internal costs more effectively, and I see several areas that will improve with the new tools we have in place."

Figure 1 Current Communications Infrastructure



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