



Windows 7 Customer Solution Case Study



Overview

Country or Region: United States
Industry: IT Consulting, Professional Services

Customer Profile

itSynergy of Phoenix, AZ, delivers comprehensive IT products and services to more than 200 small and mid-size customers. The firm has 10 employees and 20 computers.

Business Situation

Paying attention to customer satisfaction as well as operational efficiencies are the two main business challenges for the IT firm.

Solution

Features in Windows 7 are helping drive increased customer satisfaction and get IT consulting work done faster.

Benefits

- Deployment Accelerates By 50 Percent
- Better Battery Management Increases Productivity Up to 40 Percent
- Efficient Network Connections Speed Workflow
- Pin-Point Search Results
- Action Center Helps Drive Faster Solutions

OS Seen as Driver of Greater Customer Satisfaction and Efficiency for IT Firm

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Michael Cocanower, president of itSynergy

itSynergy, Phoenix, Arizona, provides technology solutions to over 200 small and mid-size customers while driving their businesses strategically and achieving bottom-line results. The consulting firm has been invited to be part of the Windows® 7 Professional pre-launch program called *Ignite*. itSynergy earned this honor because of a proven commitment to excellence and its past achievements as a Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner. The firm’s constant attention to improving customer satisfaction and operational efficiencies has helped it take advantage of a number of new features in the Windows 7 operating system. For example, engineers are connecting to networks faster, able to extend the amount of work done on laptops, find data and files faster, and are able to more rapidly solve computer problems.



Situation

Serving more than 200 businesses, itSynergy utilizes the latest Microsoft® technology to build, develop, deploy and support solutions that efficiently drive bottom-line results for small and mid-market clients. As a Microsoft Certified Gold Partner and being lead by one of just 51 Microsoft Small Business Server® MVP's in the world, itSynergy supports companies who seek a trusted advisor with the highest credentials in the industry. The IT firm has 10 employees and over 20 computers—a powerful combination of laptops, desktops and servers.

The two key business challenges for itSynergy are customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. These are not business problems per se, but on-going areas of focus for the consulting firm.

“Customer satisfaction is the bellwether of our success,” noted Michael Cocanower, president of itSynergy. “Keeping the customer happy means we’re doing things right in terms of products, service, cost management, uptime, etc.”

“Running our IT consulting business more efficiently is also one of those perennial objectives. We look for tools and technology that will speed up workflow and allow us to do more with less.”

Because of its outstanding reputation as one of Microsoft's leading small business partners, itSynergy has been invited to participate in the Windows 7 beta program known as “Ignite.” A current customer of the firm and the firm itself are currently using Windows 7.

“We use what we sell,” said Cocanower. “We lean heavily on the same technologies we recommend to clients to create efficiencies in our own business. We are discovering

features in Windows 7 that are making that kind of positive impact.”

Solution

itSynergy has found several features within Windows 7 that are helping to increase customer satisfaction and streamline its own business.

Snap, Shake, Peek

The Windows Aero® Snap feature allows windows to be viewed side-by-side by dragging windows to borders, left and right. Grab and shake the foremost screen to make all other screens behind disappear. The Peek feature is invoked by clicking on the lower right hand Show Desktop rectangle. The desktop is immediately visible to view gadgets and other desktop icons. Click again to restore all open windows. These features are allowing itSynergy engineers to navigate through documents and projects more efficiently, saving valuable time while managing costs.

Network Connection Wizard

- Network Connection Wizard provides easier desktop connection to wireless, VPN and LAN networks. For itSynergy, this means engineers can more quickly identify and connect or disconnect from network connection options within a single window.

Location Aware Printing

As technicians move from one network to another, Location Aware Printing automatically recognizes each new default printer.

Taskbar Customization

- Jump Lists allow users to see the most recent files by right-clicking on the taskbar. Also, right-clicking on an application icon such as Microsoft Office Word will show the most recent Word documents.

Hibernate, Sleep

Windows 7 starts up, shuts down, resumes from standby and responds faster. For itSynergy users, this means technicians can quickly get back to work as they move from one client or project to another.

Federated Search

While searching within Windows 7, itSynergy users have enhanced features that deepen search capabilities, essentially making Windows 7 a giant search engine that scours local PCs, HomeGroup, network, external drives, and the Internet.

Problem Steps Recorder

Problem Steps Recorder enables itSynergy users to capture the keystrokes and associated screen for any computer problem for a faster, precise diagnosis. Training tutorials can also be created quickly.

Power Management

Laptop batteries last longer with power-saving features like Battery Power Management.

Advanced Backup

Advanced Backup easily backs up any file, including all local files, or an entire business network.

Action Center

Action Center consolidates alerts from 10 Windows features that deal with security and maintenance.

Benefits

Deployment Accelerates By 50 Percent

"The Windows 7 installation process is the best we've seen in years," noted Mark D. MacLachlan, infrastructure team manager, itSynergy. "We initially did a 32-bit and a 64-bit install that took about 45 minutes, about half the time of XP.

"Obviously, Microsoft streamlined the whole process with fewer prompts and moving questions up front rather than asking for information throughout the install. In other words, you don't have to babysit any longer," continued MacLachlan.

Faster Resume and Boot Times Make Engineers More Efficient

"The Hibernate/Sleep features help us to resume working much faster," said MacLachlan. "It's stable and brings us back up and running and still connected to the network. This is something we couldn't count on with Vista."

Efficient Network Connections Speed Workflow

"The Network Connection Wizard speeds up my workflow by rapidly connecting to any type of network I need, whether Wi-Fi, Mobile Broadband, dial-up or corporate VPN," said Robert Vasquez, systems engineer, itSynergy. "In addition, the user interface is intuitive and easy to use. It even works with wireless networks that don't broadcast an SSID.

"The Network Connection Wizard is particularly helpful to less technically oriented customers," noted MacLachlan. "It reduces IT costs for the customer and adds incremental value to the overall service we provide."

Easy How-To Tutorials

"Problem Steps Recorder helps our customers precisely capture computer problems; it's a power 'How-To' recording device for customer training purposes," said John Leschorn, senior systems engineer, itSynergy.

Revenue Increases Anticipated

"Making money is directly tied to keeping customers happy," said Cocanower. "Features like Problem Steps Recorder are amazing tools that will help us capture and solve problems faster."

"In minutes, the Problem Steps Recorder also helps us quickly create customer tutorials that otherwise would take a half hour or more to develop.

"The buzz associated with Windows 7 has been very well received by our customers," said Cocanowner. "Many of them skipped Windows Vista, but are planning to upgrade to Windows 7 as soon as it's available."

Better Battery Management Increases Productivity Up to 40 Percent

"We're seeing a 30 to 40 percent increase in laptop battery life with the new Power Management feature," said Vasquez. "And more battery life translates into more productivity. Boot time is 2-3 times faster than Windows Vista. That means we're productive that much quicker as well."

Annoyance Down, Navigation Up

"The annoyance factor is gone," noted Robert Vasquez, systems engineer, itSynergy. "Features like Peek and un-pinned Gadgets make navigating the desktop faster and more functional.

"The User Account Control feature in Windows 7 allows us technicians to fine-tune the level of security interruptions that matches our style of work. Customers also like the ability to dial up or down the security level," continued Vasquez.

Pin-Point Search Results

"Windows 7 Federated Search integrated with IE 8 delivers more search power than ever before," noted Leschorn. "Deep searches across the network and Internet produce more pinpointed results. Slices and Accelerator features within IE8 make finding and tracking information even easier and more convenient.

"Searching with Windows 7 and IE 8 has been significantly enhanced," noted Leschorn. "Federated Search is deeper and more powerful. It goes beyond key words to scour at the control panel and command levels. And, within IE 8, Accelerators and Web Slices make finding and updating web information extremely easy.

"In addition, the auto-suggestion feature within IE 8 speeds searches by identifying the most common search phrases, reducing search time while increasing relevancy and in turn increasing productivity."

Solid Reliability, Faster Fixes

"The 64-bit version of Windows 7 is very solid and reliable," said MacLachlan. "By contrast, Windows Vista locked up on me 2-3 times a day. When I did have an issue with an anti-virus program, Windows 7 identified a DLL error giving me the information I needed to fix it.

"Though Windows Vista would identify some errors, only Windows 7, with its enhanced reporting system, solved the problems that have been haunting me and my computer for over a year.

"Windows 7 has better reporting for installing new hardware drivers. A video card driver previously running under Windows Vista turned out to be flaky. Windows 7 automatically went out to the Internet and found the right replacement. Very impressive."

Automatic "Didn't Remember" Backups

"Advanced Backup is a feature that will benefit a lot of our clients because they don't remember to do it, don't know how or both," said Vasquez. "This Windows 7 feature makes it simple to set up and automatic to run."

For More Information

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For more information about itSynergy products and services, call 602-297-2400 or visit the Web site at: www.itsynergy.com

Action Center Helps Drive Faster Solutions

"Action Center is very helpful as a single place to go to solve problems. It found a couple of driver issues when I first installed Windows 7," said MacLachlan. "But the best part was that it actively searched the Internet for a solution."

Windows 7

Faster and more reliable: Windows 7 will help your organization use information technology to gain a competitive advantage in today's new world of work. Your people will be able to be more productive anyway. You will be able to support your mobile work force with better access to shared data and collaboration tools. And your IT staff will have better tools and technologies to enhance corporate IT security, data protection, and more efficient deployment and management.

For more information about Windows 7, go to: www.microsoft.com/windows/business

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