



Multi-Site Retail (Landscaping Products)

Challenges

- » Improve performance of Microsoft Dynamics AX (Axapta) ERP software across multiple locations.
- » Accelerate applications' performance where bandwidth constraints were apparent
- » Control/Optimise network usage

Solution Provided

- » Exbander Precision Devices

Benefits Delivered

- » Sales order searches in Microsoft Dynamics AX (Axapta) that took 7 to 9 seconds are now instantaneous.
- » Comprehensive network visibility
- » Bandwidth upgrade deferred

Reseller

- » Concorde Informatics Limited, West Yorkshire

Marshalls PLC

Exbander Precision consolidated network traffic reporting & management maximises user productivity using existing bandwidth.

Established in the late 1880s, Marshalls is the UK's leading manufacturer of superior natural stone and innovative concrete hard land-scaping products, supplying the construction, home improvement, and landscape markets.

The Company proudly claims to provide the product ranges, design services, technical expertise, ideas, and inspiration that transform gardens, drives and public/commercial landscapes.

The Group operates its own quarries and manufacturing sites, as well as 4 service centres and 14 offices throughout the UK. As a major PLC, Marshalls is committed to quality in everything it does, including environmental best practice and continual improvement in health and safety performance for the benefit of its 3,500 strong workforce.

Marshalls' IT infrastructure supports 1,600 clients based at 53 locations across the United Kingdom that rely upon a variety of applications ranging from corporate Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software to general office automation utilities including email and internet access.

A sophisticated MPLS IP VPN network infrastructure based upon Cisco hardware provides connectivity across the enterprise.

The Challenge:

Microsoft Dynamics AX ERP software is run across Marshall's 4 service centre and office locations, and performance issues including slow report generation and delayed sales enquiries were being experienced, resulting in user frustration and poor customer service.

Following an introduction of DBAM's solution to Marshalls by Preferred Reseller Concorde Informatics Limited, the Exbander Precision (EP) range was presented to provide network visibility and gain an in-depth understanding of the problems that Marshalls faced.

An initial examination of the application's operation revealed that bandwidth was not a constraint, but that the source of the problem was the way that Microsoft Dynamics (AX) Client/Server operation was configured to work across the WAN. Further consultation concluded that the key to resolving their WAN performance issues, lay in the ability to accelerate network traffic and that Exbander Precision provided the platform to enable this.



Marshalls Commercial Landscapes



Marshalls Home & Garden

Case Study

EP60000



The Solution: Exbander Precision Devices

Marshalls has installed one high performance EP60000 device at its central site to monitor and optimise the performance of its Internet and MPLS connections, with a further four EP60 devices at its service centres. An additional EP60000 is installed at its Disaster Recovery site.

The Company is in the process of rolling out EP Devices to remote locations (in line with its corporate Microsoft Dynamics AX (Axapta) roll out according to the size and need of each site.

In partnership with Concorde Informatics Limited, DBAM presented its Exbander Precision devices. DBAM’s holistic approach to network visibility, provided the granular detail required to fully understand the problems that Marshalls faced.

Having provided a precise insight into the protocol architecture of Microsoft Dynamics AX, the DBAM solution was configured to accommodate Dynamics AX characteristics through sequence recognition and implementation of techniques which reduce network payload. This in turn led to acceptable Client/Server operations across the network.

“DBAM goes beyond simply providing acceleration”, commented Steven Marshall, Client Services & Communications Manager, Marshalls plc, “with reporting functionality that gives network visibility that we previously lacked, and which we recognised was essential in resolving poor applications’ performance”.

The insight provided by DBAM’s reporting facilities has allowed Mr Marshall to optimise application performance and educate users with regard to the way they use network resources. It also provides valuable information that allows Marshalls to guard against the possibility of network misuse.

The Benefits:

Marshalls recognises three distinct benefits from its investment in Exbander Precision Devices.

- **The visibility that the DBAM Systems solution brings to Marshalls gives the Company insight into its network that would only have been possible with the acquisition of high end network management and Sniffer systems. Indeed, Mr Marshall was able to cite the value of DBAM’s reporting facilities as sufficient to justify the investment alone.**
- **The network insight that the EP Devices introduced has enabled Marshalls to invoke configuration and usage policies that has substantially improved the performance of Microsoft Dynamics AX (Axapta) across the network such that it now runs satisfactorily.**
- **The compression/acceleration introduced by DBAM, has obviated any requirement that may have previously been considered to upgrade bandwidth across the enterprise to accommodate the need of those applications that were experiencing bandwidth constraints.**

