



IBM Network Station gets a warm reception at California HVAC supplier

If you were a customer service representative at California Hydronics, you might find yourself checking the delivery status on a customer's pipe fittings one minute and selecting equipment for a high-rise office tower the next. But until the company began using IBM Network Station network computers, you wouldn't have been able to do both jobs at the same desk.

"There was a definite dichotomy," says Brian Littleton, president and CEO of California Hydronics, a Hayward, California-based company that has supplied heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) and plumbing systems to Northern California and Western Nevada for more than 40 years. "While most of our business applications run off our AS/400®, the bulk of our design work was done on PCs." As a result, customer service reps frequently had to leave the AS/400 terminals at their desks to use PC-based design applications at another desk.

"It wasn't efficient and, worse, it kept the customer waiting," Littleton says.

But now, customer service engineers at California Hydronics get simultaneous access to all of their AS/400 and PC-based applications, as well as the Internet, from one desktop using the IBM Network Station.

A switch from PCs

California Hydronics is just one of many companies finding great benefit in switching from PCs to less expensive, easily managed network computers, and giving up nothing in return.

"I've found the Network Station's performance is as good as any Pentium I've got," Littleton says. "What's more, we have access to AS/400 and PC applications and, with the WinCenter software on our NT server, we can run DOS, Windows® 3.1 and Windows 95 programs with better menus and multi-user support," he says.

Application	Consolidation of AS/400 and PC applications on the desktop
Hardware	IBM Network Station
Software	Network Station Manager, WinCenter, AS/400 business applications, PC applications





Littleton originally used standalone PCs to run the company's design applications. But in addition to being expensive, he found that maintaining PCs was "a nightmare."

"Software upgrades were a big problem," Littleton says. "We had to go to each machine, load the software and then try and figure out why it wasn't working because each machine was slightly different." Another problem was that employees were loading so much personal software on their hard disks that sometimes there wasn't enough space left for the company's applications. "We didn't realize that our employees would do things like that," he recalls.

With today's Network Stations, however, the company's PC software upgrade and disk storage problems have completely disappeared. There is only one copy of each application to upgrade, stored on a centrally managed server along with all user files.

Reduced maintenance and costs. Simple design and reliability were also big factors in California Hydronics's selection of the Network Station. In fact, the company expects to save anywhere from \$1,000 to \$1,500 a year per station on reduced maintenance and MIS costs.

An IBM shop since 1965 and an early user of the AS/400, Littleton says that he's become "spoiled" by reliable products that work. "I could spend hours telling you how great the AS/400 is, especially after spending time with PCs," he says.

"Our AS/400 has had just 14 hours of downtime in six years and hardware failures are almost non-existent. I expect the Network Station is the same way. There's really nothing to break down, and nothing to maintain."

Remote configuration is another benefit. Using the Network Station Manager software, the company can provide Internet access to stations that need to communicate with suppliers via the Web. AS/400 terminal emulation can be customized to the needs and preferences of each user, too — all from a single administrative workstation.

Overall, the Network Station has helped California Hydronics improve productivity in its customer service department while reducing operating costs. So now, when you call a California Hydronics customer service representative, the one phrase you probably won't hear is "Hold on while I check that for you."

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 Network Station information via the World Wide Web at:
<http://www.ibm.com/nc>



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