

Hamilton Beach simplifies global email operations and saves 60% with Google Apps Premier Edition



AT A GLANCE

What they wanted to do:

- Unite dispersed operations through integrated communications
- Reduce IT complexity and effort with an enterprise-ready solution
- Obtain a more cost-effective collaboration suite with ample storage

What they did:

- Migrated to Google Apps to share information among global staff and suppliers

What they accomplished:

- Saved 60% in total costs relative to previous system
 - Minimized IT complexity by moving to an all-in-one, hosted suite for the enterprise
 - Provided 25GB of mailbox storage to users
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Business

When Louis Hamilton and Chester Beach teamed up in the early 1900s, little did they know that their collaboration would lead to many industry firsts. An early milestone was Beach's universal electric motor, capable of operating on both alternating and direct current. The motor was used to power sewing machines and other ingenious devices, ending the era of the treadle sewing machine and other muscle-powered chores such as mixing. Today, Hamilton Beach Brands, Inc. is a leading designer, marketer, and distributor of small electric household appliances as well as commercial products for restaurants, bars, and hotels.



It takes a village

Hamilton Beach has more than 500 employees extended across multiple time zones. The company's product engineering, product quality, and corporate functions are located in Virginia and sales offices and distribution facilities are located in various states and in Mexico and Canada. An office located overseas works with the company's worldwide partners and supports the company's supply chain, product engineering efforts, and product testing. Communication among all of these employees, offices, and functions is critical in streamlining operations, staying coordinated, and maintaining superior product quality.

Unfortunately, the company's traditional messaging infrastructure was outdated and burdensome for IT staff to maintain. Backup requirements cut into system uptime, devouring hours of precious weekend time for IT staff and compromising employee access to information. Spam protection was costly yet still did not stop frequent spam influxes. And storage was becoming a problem. Mailbox storage tripled in size over three years as users shared sizable engineering design files and needed to retain and search large numbers of emails and documents. "We were constantly haranguing people to delete email," recalls Louis Gary, Manager of Client Services. "Ten years ago, we could restrict email to 90 days of content, but not any more. Volume continued to grow, especially with attachments, and caused great strain on our prior systems."

In addition to struggling with desktop-based email, Hamilton Beach was challenged to provide mobile users with reliable global access to email. The company also needed better collaboration options for the entire staff. In one instance, Gary and his team spent hundreds of hours trying to build a shared website to enable collaboration between Virginia-based employees and partners around the world, but the effort was largely in vain. "For international partners, it took forever to upload and download information from our internal sites," he says. "The initial collaborative website wasn't viable."

From complexity to clarity

When Hamilton Beach examined its productivity requirements and infrastructure, it saw a complex IT mix – each with additive costs, challenges, and maintenance requirements on both servers and the desktop. They knew they had to find a simpler, less costly, enterprise-friendly alternative. At first, Hamilton Beach

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Louis Gary
Manager of Client Services

ABOUT GOOGLE APPS

Google Apps offers simple, powerful communication and collaboration tools for enterprises of any size in business, education, or government – all hosted by Google to streamline setup, minimize maintenance, and reduce IT costs. With Gmail, Google Calendar, and integrated IM, users can stay connected and work together with ease, even in private domains. And, using Google Docs, which include word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation tools, they can share files and collaborate in real-time, keeping versions organized and available wherever and whenever users work.

For more information, visit
www.google.com/a

considered just upgrading its current messaging technology, but foresaw that the transition would require substantial employee training as well as costly server upgrades across multiple offices. Exploring options, they considered new server based and hosted collaboration solutions, but found them all expensive, complicated, unproven, or risky. Then Hamilton Beach took a look at Google Apps.

“Google Apps’ functionality had become impressively enterprise-ready,” says Gary. “Our team did a feature comparison between Google Apps and our incumbent solution and, considering the feature and cost benefits, the choice to go with Google Apps was clear. Key features like instant global access, support for different languages across our world-wide operations, virtually limitless storage, and speed helped make the case.” Next, they ran the numbers. “We calculated out over a five-year period and realized that we could achieve a 60% reduction in our e-mail system Total Cost of Ownership by moving to Google Apps,” says Gary. “That factored in server upgrades, back-up procedures and tapes, spam filtering, training costs across all of our offices, sync systems with our wireless phones, and infrastructure support in terms of maintaining servers and desktop applications. We would also eliminate all of the servers that supported only email.”

Deployment began. The Information Services (IS) team migrated from its legacy system to Google Apps in two steps, moving archived and then current email. They also moved calendar and personal contacts to Google Apps. Consulting firm Binary Tree assisted in the move from the previous solutions to Google Apps. Visibility to individual calendars for meeting invitations during the migration was made possible between Lotus Notes calendars and Google Apps calendars with Appirio’s Free/Busy system. Overall, the process took six months – a duration planned to maintain business continuity and minimize user disruption.

Less complexity, lower costs

With Google Apps, Hamilton Beach will eliminate thousands of dollars in operational and capital costs over a five-year period, all while streamlining IS operations. Because everyone uses a web-based email interface for Gmail, IS no longer administers complicated client email software, which simplifies the desktop support environment. Time-consuming weekend back-ups and concerns about spam are a thing of the past, and desktop application troubleshooting has ended now that everything is browser-based. “We’ve gone from averaging 40 hours a week of IS support of our e-mail systems to just a few hours,” says Gary. “Now IS employees can spend time more productively on other tasks.”

Along with time and resource savings, Google Apps adds the benefit of integrated data flow across communications and collaboration applications. Gmail streamlines operations, supporting automated notifications systems from customers and internal systems and handling large volumes of consumer inquiries. Google Calendar and integrated instant messaging help keep everyone on the same page in terms of events, up-to-the-minute information, and meetings. Mobile users can access email and calendars without connection fees, servers, or client software. Looking to the future, Hamilton Beach plans to use Google’s Postini security and archiving services for email archiving and management, and other options like Google Sites and Docs to enable better collaboration.

“As a large engineering and marketing company, innovation and speed-to-market are critical to our success,” says Gary. “Google Apps provides the enterprise-capability we need to be successful, at a fraction of the cost and complexity of other solutions, and frees up resources that can be used to deliver on business needs.”

