

MICROSOFT ACTIVE DIRECTORY AND EXCHANGE 2007

IN JUST FOUR MONTHS, PLY GEM PACIFIC WINDOWS IMPLEMENTS NEW MICROSOFT TECHNOLOGIES TO CONTROL AND ENHANCE ITS FUTURE OPERATIONS.

To complete its acquisition of CertainTeed Windows, Ply Gem Pacific Windows had to implement numerous new technologies to ensure that business operations would continue to run smoothly. Working with West Monroe Partners, Ply Gem deployed Microsoft Active Directory and Exchange 2007—creating a scalable infrastructure designed around its specific needs and operations.

PLY GEM INDUSTRIES INC.

Ply Gem Industries is a leading manufacturer of residential exterior building products in North America and the leading manufacturer of vinyl siding and railing. Ply Gem caters to the home repair and remodeling and new home construction sectors, selling product in all 50 states and western Canada.

MEETING THE TERMS OF A TRANSITION AGREEMENT.

To expand its existing windows product line, Ply Gem acquired CertainTeed's vinyl window and patio door business from its holding company, Saint-Gobain. As part of the acquisition process, Ply Gem needed to "carve out" CertainTeed Windows from its former parent's shared-services environment within a four-month period. Ultimately, Ply Gem identified an immediate need to transition the technology infrastructure to support the company's future operations.

For assistance with strategizing, forecasting, and implementing a new back-end infrastructure, Ply Gem turned to West Monroe Partners. West Monroe Partners offered deep expertise in infrastructure strategy and migration, as well as previous experience with manufacturing environments.

West Monroe Partners and Ply Gem worked together to identify, understand, and estimate the infrastructure and storage requirements that were necessary to support an enterprise Microsoft Active Directory and Exchange 2007 deployment at Ply Gem Pacific Windows. Previously, Saint-Gobain utilized Exchange 2003 and Active Directory; thus, users and administrators would be familiar with the new, but enhanced Ply Gem Pacific Windows technologies.

ESTABLISHING A NETWORK DESIGNED FOR ITS FUTURE.

Working alongside the Ply Gem Pacific Windows IT team, West Monroe Partners established a new Active Directory architecture that provided the company with greater control over network resources. This process included creating new and consistent organizational naming standards for employee user names, workstations, printers, distribution groups, and security groups across the company's three manufacturing sites. More importantly, before a successful migration could occur, the project team accessed and structured individuals' security rights against the new Ply Gem Pacific Windows Active Directory security model—assigning all Ply Gem users to specific network resources in order to reduce risk.

With the introduction of Microsoft Exchange 2007, the company's IT administrators could take advantage of the greater processing power on 64-bit hardware, enhanced virus and spam protection, the redesigned Web Access portal, enhanced search functionality, and numerous other features. A key challenge was migrating users' mailboxes from the parent's network to the new network, as the team was unable to cross-connect the companies' networks during the transition. After careful planning and testing, the project team managed the conversion by exporting and importing user mailboxes at the desktop level.

West Monroe Partners established the new infrastructure and completed the migration within the specified four-month timeframe—enabling Ply Gem to fulfill the requirements of its transition services agreement. As a result, Ply Gem Pacific Windows has established a flexible, secure, and controllable network designed around its specific business requirements.

West Monroe Partners is an international, full-service business and technology consulting firm focused on guiding organizations through projects that fundamentally transform their business. With the experience to create the most ambitious visions as well as the skills to implement the smallest details of our clients' most critical projects, West Monroe Partners is a proven provider of growth and efficiency to large enterprises, as well as more nimble middle-market organizations. Our more than 300 consulting professionals drive better business results by harnessing our collective experience across a range of industries, serving clients out of offices across the United States and Canada.