



Windows 7 Customer Solution Case Study



Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Home Improvement,
Professional Services

Customer Profile

Gutterman is a family-owned and operated business that has serviced the Washington DC, Maryland and the Northern Virginia area since 1986. It has 35 employees and 19 computers.

Business Situation

Gutterman is suffering from a mid-life crisis of sorts. Juggling a large payroll, huge database and thousands of documents has slowed productivity.

Solution

New features in Windows 7 are allowing Gutterman to run legacy software as well as search, find and navigate documents faster.

Benefits

- New OS Compatible with Legacy Database
- Faster Searching
- Low IT Costs, Speeds Fixes
- Faster Navigation
- 50 Percent Longer Work Time



New OS Nails Down Compatibility and Productivity Concerns for Home Improvement

“Windows XP Mode is the perfect compatibility solution for our legacy database and allows us to take advantage of all the new productivity technology built into Windows 7.”

Ann McGavin, General Manager and Owner, Gutterman Services

Gutterman Services, located in Sterling, Virginia, is a family-owned business that is genuine down to its roots. Begun in 1986, the company has remained committed to the highest quality products combined with uncompromising service. However, Gutterman Services is experiencing growing pains. Managing thousands of documents, a large payroll, and the onslaught of seasonal business, has slowed productivity. With the IT expertise of District Computers, a Microsoft® Gold Certified partner, Gutterman is discovering features in the Windows® 7 operating system that are helping it build a better business. While using legacy software, features in the new operating system are helping to better navigate a plethora of documents and improve the overall productivity of Gutterman Services.



Situation

Gutterman Services, Inc., Sterling, Virginia, is a family-owned home improvement contractor started in 1986. The company provides doors, gutters, windows and sliding solutions for its customers. However, as the business has grown over the last 23 years, it has become more complicated. According to Anne McGavin, general manager and owner, Gutterman has reached a tipping point. Overall management of the company, paperwork, payroll, a huge customer base, 35 employees and 20 computers handling two dozen work quotes, and a number of remodeling projects each day has Gutterman searching for tools that will help. “Gutterman is in a mid-life crisis in terms of growth and size. We’re looking for tools that will help sling-shot us through this period to be more productive and see more growth.

“We have a huge customer database with documents and digital photos documenting before, during and after the job.

“Managing documents and finding documents are our two biggest challenges. After nearly a quarter century of business, we have tens of thousands of files, photos and communications. Managing those and thousands more each year is a challenge.”

Another very real computing challenge is being able to use its large customer database as new operating system technology is embraced.”Compatibility is another barrier to OS migration. Our database works fine with Windows XP®, not so with Windows Vista®. Any new OS has to solve this problem, or we simply won’t use it.”

Solution

With the aid of District Computers, the home improvement contractor is discovering features in Windows 7 that are accelerating workflow by finding and navigating documents more efficiently.

XP Mode

New capabilities in Windows 7 allow it to run legacy software under Windows XP. For Gutterman, this means its large database is immediately compatible with Windows 7.

Aero® desktop experience

Features like Snap, Shake, Peek and Hover speed navigation among various files and open windows.

Libraries

Gutterman management can temporarily assemble all of the files associated with a complex windows replacement project into a single one-view folder, regardless of where the files are located on the network.

Network Connection Wizard

Gutterman users can quickly and easily move and re-connect from one network—VPN, LAN or wireless broadband—to another.

Snipping Tool

Gutterman users can use Snipping Tool to capture a screen shot, or snip, of any object on their screen. Users can then annotate, save or share the image.

Boot, Resume

Trigger Start Services technology enables Gutterman users to boot or resume their computers more rapidly.

Aero® desktop experience

Aero experience features like Snap, Shake, Peek and Hover speed up the document navigation process for Gutterman users.

Taskbar Customization

Powerful taskbar features allow Gutterman users to pin applications and individual files to the taskbar for quick access. Jump List or the most recent files also provide quick access to frequently used files.

Problem Steps Recorder

This feature allows Gutterman users to capture computer problems using integrated screen shots and keystrokes. IT problems are resolved faster and training tutorials are easier to create.

Battery Power Management

Gutterman Windows 7 users are extending laptop battery life along with the amount of work that gets done.

Benefits

New OS Compatible with Legacy

Database

Using ACT software as its database, the company has thousands of customers and associated project information invested in this software solution, all of which run well under the old Windows XP operating system. As it contemplates migrating to Windows 7, Gutterman needed a compatibility solution. Said McGavin, "Windows XP Mode is the perfect compatibility solution for our legacy database and our desire to take advantage of all the new productivity technology built into Windows 7."

Faster Searching

One of our main activities each day is preparing quotes for customers. Gutterman has created a number of templates which it uses to speed the quote process. Finding the exact template and a variety of other files is now faster and easier according to McGavin. "Federated Search is my new best friend. More than 20 times a day, we generate quotes for new customers. It took about two dozen clicks in a maze of folders and more than a minute to get to the right file. I get back a half hour per day, just starting with Federated Search.

"We have created a master customer list as a sales tool. Every time we pitch new business we share the list and, inevitably the prospect can find someone they know who has used

Gutterman. It's a powerful sales tool, but we lost it. It was somewhere on our network, but it was accidentally renamed. Federated Search found it. Whew!"

Digital Notes Convenient

McGavin's day is full of a dozens of projects and interruptions. Even the smallest new tools in Windows 7 are a big help. "Is it okay to love Sticky Notes? With Windows 7 I'm happily making the move from analog sticky notes to digital sticky notes and saving a bundle on the over-priced paper variety.

"Snipping Tool helps me create support documentation for guys that work with hammers, rather than computers. I can quickly capture any screen image and pop it into a text document."

Low IT Costs, Speeds Fixes

McGavin uses Problem Steps Recorder to capture IT problems quickly and to create new employee tutorials. "I'm just learning about Problem Steps Recorder. It helps fix computer problems faster by clearly capturing what's wrong for District Computers to remedy. However, it doubles as an employee training tool, quickly generating tutorials. I like this feature already."

Faster Navigation

When Gutterman staff are creating quotes or managing the documents for various window or door projects, the new Taskbar and Library features help speed-up the process. "Taskbar Customization with its Jump Lists and Pinning makes applications and files instantly available. Aero desktop experience gives me the Snap, Peek, and Shake features to more efficiently manage documents. These are little tools with a big impact.

"When we're really busy, Jump Lists and Pinning are giving me back an hour a day. In the end this means more business because I

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For more information about District Computers products and services, call 202-558-5483 or visit the Web site at: www.districtcomputers.com

For more information about Gutterman Services, Inc. products and services, call 703-430-4420 or visit the Web site at: www.guttermanservices.com

can make callbacks that I normally wouldn't get to.

"Libraries are perfect for proposals. We've created one for each product area—windows, gutters, siding, etc. All of the templates and forms we need are immediately available."

50 Percent Longer Work Time

McGavin loves the increased battery life her laptop gets with Windows 7. "I'd estimate a 50 percent increase in battery life. This means more mobility without having to worry about finding an outlet, which in turn means more work can get done."

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

Software and Services

- Products
 - Microsoft Windows 7 Professional
 - Microsoft Windows Vista Professional
 - Microsoft Office 2007 Professional
 - Windows Small Business Server 2003

Hardware

- Lenovo
- HP