



Solution Overview

INDUSTRY
Print and Media Communications

SCENARIO
Freedom Communications needed to centralize company information while allowing individual locations to maintain their autonomy.

COMPANY PROFILE
Freedom Communications, Inc. has more than 60 daily and weekly papers, national magazines and local CBS and ABC affiliates across the U.S.

SOLUTION
Freedom Communications invested in a high-performing and stable platform, which allows them to update all locations from a central site, spending less time and money on administration.

SOFTWARE USED
Microsoft Great Plains eEnterprise
Financial Series
Distribution Series
Purchasing Series
Project Series
Human Resource Series
Customization/Integration Tools
FRx Financial Reporting
Microsoft SQL Server 7.0
Microsoft NT Server

Freedom Communications

With more than 80 users and a variety of financial and business solutions across 40 sites, the ability to maintain their culture of autonomy and gain support of their personnel across the enterprise was a key requirement for the success of a new business solution.

Company

Based in Irvine, California, Freedom Communications, Inc. has more than 60 daily and weekly papers, national magazines and local CBS and ABC affiliated television stations across the United States. As their name implies, Freedom Communications values the entrepreneurial spirit of its individual sites. Each organization is a stand alone, autonomous decision-making business. And each is a leader in its individual market—they serve a specific industry or community. Freedom Communications has proven successful with this business model—their daily newspapers are #1 in their communities.

The right combination

Freedom Communications, working with Microsoft Great Plains' value-added reseller Collins Computing, Inc., selected a robust solution with hardware and software in leading technologies: Microsoft Great Plains eEnterprise, Microsoft SQL Server, Microsoft NT Server, Citrix WinFrame for the client and server, Hewlett-Packard NetServer Pros Servers and Pentium Pros. This key investment has allowed Freedom Communications to leverage a centralized business solution while maintaining the autonomy of its individual sites.



“The knowledge and understanding of the individual community resides at each paper, magazine and TV station that serves that location. The new system couldn’t inhibit local decisions. We needed a system and a vendor to support local decision-making.”

***Greg Hurst
Director of Information
Technology***

Supporting the culture

By investing in a high-performing and stable platform, Freedom Communications can update all locations from a central site, spending less time and money on administration. The system’s ease of use and intuitive interface creates an environment that supports the culture of the individual sites while streamlining the workflow across the company. The exceptional working relationship between Freedom Communications and Collins Computing has resulted in a satisfied customer with a comprehensive business solution, top-notch service and future growth opportunities.

Growing from one newspaper business in Ohio to an empire of more than 60 daily and weekly papers, national magazines and local CBS and ABC affiliated television stations, takes more than business savvy. It takes vision. Based in Irvine, California, Freedom Communications has clearly been a company of vision since its inception. By using Microsoft Great Plains as their business management solution on Microsoft SQL Server across Citrix WinFrame, Freedom Communications has continued to foster the spirit of autonomy so important to the individual locations while centralizing key data that can be accessed from any location.

Recognizing the impact of change

With more than 80 users and a variety of financial and business solutions across 40 sites, the ability to maintain their culture of autonomy and gain support of their personnel across the enterprise was a key requirement for the success of the new business solution. Working with their local value-added reseller was a key component to that success.

“From the get-go, they figured out what was important to us,” says Greg Hurst, Freedom Communications’ Director of Information Technology. “Our idiosyncratic culture is also what makes us successful. The knowledge and understanding of the individual community resides at each paper, magazine and TV station that serves that location. The new system couldn’t inhibit local decisions. We needed a system and a vendor to support local decision-making.”

Optimizing hardware & technology choices

Freedom Communications is committed to embracing new technologies and innovation in the communication

industry. It was no surprise that they sought the same type of innovation when managing their finances across the enterprise. They invested in leading technologies like Microsoft SQL Server, Citrix and Hewlett-Packard systems. With a significant investment in hardware, they have implemented four Hewlett-Packard NetServe Pros as servers; two Citrix servers; two SQL/NT servers, 200 Pentium pros and quad processors. Their initial investment in hardware has already been cost-effective in terms of performance, stability and workflow.

Selecting an enterprise system

Focused on leading technologies, Freedom Communications decided on eEnterprise—a business management solution that employs the industry standard technologies of Microsoft SQL Server and Citrix WinFrame.

Today Freedom Communications is using eEnterprise to handle everything from General Ledger with Intercompany Processing and Multidimensional Analysis to Purchasing and Invoicing.

Cindy Allen, Budget Manager and Microsoft Great Plains Project Manager at Freedom Communications, notes, “The system is so flexible. Our controller was able to set up the GL accounts to allow the consolidations that corporate wanted, and still allow the individual entities to report data the way they wanted.”

“Citrix allows access for all users. Rather than paying a per user license fee, all our users on the network have access with Citrix WinFrame, providing significant savings,” explains Dan Diaz, Senior DBA/Systems Analyst. “Citrix is transparent. Users just sign in and they don’t even really know it’s there. It’s seamless,” states Cindy Allen. Diaz adds, “There are no performance complaints. We’re adding three companies each month and it just keeps on going.”

Relationships are key

Relationships—with a local value-added reseller and with software and hardware application vendors—are important when considering where to invest to create the enterprise-wide solution that fits a corporation’s needs.

Freedom Communications knew that their choice of Collins Computing was the right one, based on Collins’ expertise with Citrix, Microsoft and Microsoft Great

Plains. Greg Hurst, Director of Information Technology, states, "Collins Computing are experts in distributed processing." Hurst continues, "And due to their knowledge of Microsoft Great Plains, they always had a method to solve the business need we proposed."

**For every business
problem there is a
Microsoft Great Plains
Business Solution.**