



## Case Study



DirectPointe is Winning Verdict  
for Smith Knowles' IT Needs

# Smith Knowles

## The Challenge

Smith Knowles ran a network with many different types of computers running multiple operating systems. Server crashes frequently occurred and spam inundated the e-mail system.

## The Solution

DirectPointe put Smith Knowles on a standardized system. The entire network was set up over a weekend and was ready to go when employees came in Monday morning.

## The Result

The network is stable, spam has been virtually eliminated and DirectPointe quickly handles any problems that occur. Smith Knowles obtains the knowledge and expertise of a large IT staff for a small business price.

Law firms know that cases are won or lost in the details. This requires lawyers to commit their focus to every aspect of a case. What they can't afford to be is distracted by their office information technology. All that matters is that it works.

Smith Knowles, a law firm based in Ogden, Utah, focuses on real property law. The company maintains a network for its eight-attorney practice along with two additional companies the partners have founded – Lincoln Title Insurance Agency and LienCounsel. All told, they have about 40 computers on the network.

## How many versions of Windows do you have?

Smith Knowles contracted with an individual they would call to help with computer and network needs. He would come in on an on-call basis to install new equipment or handle network problems and outages. "We teach; we're not IT people," Whittaker said. "We don't have the means to hire someone to handle IT all day long. But it's a huge part of our business."

"We had a mess on our hands. We had two or three different types of computers and about six different operating systems," said Dana Farmer, shareholder with Smith Knowles. "We also had problems because our system wasn't designed for small businesses."

Smith Knowles' major problems included instability of their systems and the associated downtime. The company uses server-based case management software for all its time and file management. At the time, the server would crash every 12 to 16 weeks and would be down for a half to a full day on average. Since it is the firm's primary software package, it severely limited the productivity of the entire office

during these times. With strict deadlines and billable hours passing by, downtime was devastating.

Even when the server was running smoothly, employees still had to wade through large amounts of spam each day. "We were getting a ton of spam," noted Farmer. "We would be inundated all day with stock tips, low-price mini-cars and pharmaceutical offers. Trying to manage all of that was a real pain."

## A new network complete with doughnuts

In 2003, one of the partners learned about DirectPointe at a conference. After evaluating the company's managed IT services, Smith Knowles decided a change to their current network was in order.

The first thing DirectPointe did was send a couple of technicians to Smith Knowles to look at their existing system, learn about the applications they were using and find out what they needed from their network. Once DirectPointe analyzed the network, they prepared to install the new system.

"DirectPointe ordered the computers and loaded the software before coming to our office," said Farmer. "We shut down on Friday afternoon, and they installed everything over the weekend. When we came in on Monday, they met us with doughnuts and spent time with each person to make sure we were all up-and-running."

## Enterprise IT department at a small business price

When DirectPointe came in, one of the first things they did was make sure Smith Knowles was set up with uniform computers and a uniform operating system. Gone were they days of six multiple operating systems

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Dana Farmer,  
Smith Knowle

and everyone using different types of hardware. Standardizing their environment has contributed to the firm’s system being considerably more stable and has virtually eliminated the damaging server crashes.

DirectPointe ensures the system continues running smoothly by monitoring the network to pre-empt potential problems and quickly troubleshoot the network when one occurs. Smith Knowles has found DirectPointe to be very responsive when they have been needed.

“If our Internet goes down, we call up DirectPointe and they tell us they know and are already working on it,” said Farmer. “They even provide support with third-party vendors. If there is a problem with our case management software, they don’t try to claim it’s not their problem. We call DirectPointe and our technician gets the other vendor’s support group on a joint phone call to quickly resolve the problem.”

As for those endless e-mail offers, Farmer states that spam has pretty much stopped coming to them. They also have greater

peace of mind knowing that all of their hard drives are backed up every night.

Smith Knowles knows there are other options for managing their network, such as hiring their own IT administrator. However, the company also recognizes the value and expertise that DirectPointe provides.

“With one individual overseeing our system, we only have as much knowledge as that one person. But now, we have all the expertise of DirectPointe’s team on our side,” said Farmer. “When it came time to refresh our system, we evaluated whether or not to hire someone in house. Our conclusion was that DirectPointe’s pricing was good, we were satisfied with their service, and we had a much more stable and efficient computing system because of them.”

“It’s nice to have someone running our IT system that is in the business of being a very professional and forward-thinking IT company. DirectPointe has been a really good partner.”

## About DirectPointe

DirectPointe Inc., based in Lindon, Utah, provides a simple yet comprehensive computing solution for small and midsize businesses. The company takes ownership of the entire computing lifecycle, including evaluating, acquiring, deploying, testing, fulfilling and supporting technology, so customers have one company to handle all their computing needs. DirectPointe provides standards-based PCs and servers, industry leading productivity software, friendly and professional support with remote update and repair ability, on-site warranty service, secure remote data backup, and managed security solutions. The complete solution is delivered for one monthly payment to ease budgeting and upfront costs. Businesses can have a complete solution that is simple, manageable, and affordable so they are free to focus on their business.

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