# Recruiting Firm Chooses Microsoft Cloud Services over Google and Fuels Productivity

## Overview

**Country or Region:** United States
**Industry:** Professional services

**Customer Profile**
BridgeView IT is a staffing and recruiting company for the IT industry. Based in Denver, Colorado, the company also has offices in the New York metro area and San Francisco.

**Business Situation**
The company's diverse communications tool set required multiple logons, presented potential security risks, and worried management with reliability concerns and high costs.

**Solution**
BridgeView IT jettisoned its in-house email server and signed up for Microsoft Business Productivity Online Standard Suite, which provides cloud-based email, collaboration, instant messaging, and web conferencing.

**Benefits**
- Improved productivity and competitiveness
- More focus on core business
- Enhanced reliability
- Cost avoidance of U.S.$13,000
- Savings of $8,200 annually

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>
> Tim Glennie, Managing Partner, BridgeView IT

BridgeView IT provides recruiting services for technology firms. To provide customers with fast answers, and employees with easy-to-use and reliable communications tools, BridgeView IT replaced its on-premises email environment and Google document-sharing and instant-messaging services with Microsoft Business Productivity Online Standard Suite. The subscription-based suite provides cloud-based email, collaboration, instant messaging, and web conferencing. With the switch, BridgeView IT employees have faster access to information for more competitive customer service. By running email in Microsoft data centers, BridgeView IT is free to focus on its core business and enjoys higher email reliability. The company avoided spending U.S.$13,000 on a new messaging infrastructure and saves $8,200 annually on server maintenance and third-party backup software.

## Microsoft® Online Services

## Situation

When top technology firms need talent, they turn to BridgeView IT. BridgeView IT is a staffing and recruiting firm that helps a national network of customers identify and hire both contract and full-time employees. BridgeView IT has successfully supported the IT marketplace for over five years, with a major market presence in Colorado and the San Francisco and New York metropolitan areas. BridgeView IT is headquartered in Denver.

Reliable communication is key to the company's business. "We're either talking with a customer about their staffing needs, or we're talking to applicants about opportunities," says Tim Glennie, cofounder and Managing Partner at BridgeView IT. As the company grew and opened offices in different U.S. cities, it became more critical than ever to find information and answers quickly—including the coworker who may hold them—especially while applicants or customers were on the phone. "Because our customers are in the technology industry, they expect us to be using the latest communications technology to respond quickly to them," Glennie says.

BridgeView IT launched in 2005 with a mix of hosted business solutions to lower startup costs and speed market entry. It used Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) for phone service, hosted Microsoft Exchange Server for email messaging, and a web-based recruiting and customer-tracking application. However, in 2006, as licensing costs and the company grew, BridgeView IT decided to bring email in house. Due to expanded use of BlackBerry smartphones by its staff members, BridgeView IT needed additional server hardware to connect those devices to the email server.

The company purchased a Dell PowerEdge server running the Windows Small Business Server 2003 operating system, a program that packaged email, internal websites, support for mobile devices, Internet connectivity, file and printer sharing, and data backup and restore at a price appropriate for a small business. To enable online document sharing and instant messaging, BridgeView IT started using Google Docs and Google Talk.

BridgeView IT had a cumbersome mix of communications technologies that required multiple logons and presented security concerns. "With employees spread across multiple offices, people had to establish virtual private network connections to access files, and we were concerned about network security," Glennie says. "We needed a stable, secure email platform. Plus, if we lost power or an on-premises server failed, we were out of luck."

By 2010, BridgeView IT had to face the communications technology issue directly because its Exchange Server 2003 software and the server on which it ran were woefully out-of-date. "Our business goal has always been to focus on our core competency rather than on running servers," Glennie says. "To renew our server and all the software running on it, we were looking at a [U.S.]$13,000 expense."

## Solution

In mid-2010, BridgeView IT hired Elizabeth Duran as its new Operations Manager and gave her the assignment of replacing the messaging server. "We had this half-Google, half-Microsoft infrastructure and really needed to go one way or the other," Glennie says.

**Google Apps—30 Day Trial: Not So Seamless**

Duran seriously considered adding Google Apps and creating an all-Google environment because the price was so

appealing—U.S.$50 per user. She, Glennie, and a third employee volunteered to run a 30-day pilot of the Google suite. However, it soon became apparent that personal support was not readily available. "There was no one to talk to," Duran says. "We could only deal with Google over the web. If we called with a question, they directed us to YouTube to watch a video, or to the web. We could submit an email message, but we experienced a 72-hour turnaround. We needed a faster response than 72 hours. But still, we pushed ahead, because it was such a good deal."

The pilot group soon hit other obstacles. Synchronizing Gmail by Google with folders in the Microsoft Office Outlook messaging and collaboration client was problematic. Gmail truncated folder names so that they were unreadable, and according to Glennie, the group found the Gmail interface to be far "clunkier" than employees were used to with Office Outlook.

The final straw came when employees had to manually convert Microsoft Office documents to the Google Docs format, which was an inconvenience and caused formatting to be lost. "We have lots of shared Office documents, but when we uploaded them to Google Docs, we had to convert them to the Google format," Glennie says. "This was a deal breaker. Presentation is important to our customers. As we continued our research, we uncovered other potential challenges for our needs. For example, the Google applications synched with BlackBerry devices, but it was not a seamless sync. Gmail also didn't sync well with Outlook calendars. The things that didn't work quite right kept piling up. The service was inexpensive but for good reason."

**Microsoft Online Services: A Night-and-Day Difference**

In October 2010, Glennie found out about Microsoft Business Productivity Online Standard Suite during a conversation with Jim West, Vice President of Pariveda Solutions, a Denver-area Microsoft Gold Certified Partner. Pariveda had successfully migrated another customer to the suite, and Glennie was intrigued. Microsoft Business Productivity Online Standard Suite, part of Microsoft Online Services, is a collection of finished services that includes Microsoft Exchange Online for messaging, Microsoft SharePoint Online for collaboration, Microsoft Office Live Meeting for web conferencing, and Microsoft Office Communications Online for instant messaging. These "cloud" programs are hosted by Microsoft and delivered over the Internet for a monthly per-user subscription.

Pariveda helped BridgeView IT confirm that the Microsoft online suite would meet its needs, and BridgeView IT decided to sign up for a 30-day trial to evaluate specific features and see how the suite met its needs. Pariveda also confirmed that Business Productivity Online Standard Suite worked seamlessly with BlackBerry smartphones and with the customer tracking software. "Pariveda had already been through the validation and migration process with another customer, which gave us the assurance that we were making the right decision," Glennie says. "Plus, working with them was like working with Microsoft; they provided prompt response and had deep insight into where the service was headed."

Microsoft product functionality and support were other deciding factors. "We were already familiar with Exchange Server, and we got the feeling that Microsoft was fully committed to growing its hosted

solutions business," Glennie says. "Microsoft support was a night-and-day difference from Google. If something didn't work, Microsoft always provided a workaround; there was never a straight 'no.'"

**Suite of Communications Tools: Continuous Access**

Mike Burgess, a Pariveda technical architect, used Microsoft migration tools to migrate BridgeView IT mailboxes to Exchange Online, which provides employees with the latest version of Exchange Server, 25-gigabyte mailboxes, easy access to email from any web browser, and enhanced protection from malicious software (also called malware). BridgeView IT makes use of Microsoft Forefront Online Protection for Exchange, included with Exchange Online, for safeguarding against spam, viruses, and phishing scams.

"One of the most attractive features was the single sign on for all the Microsoft Online Services communications tools," Glennie says. "Employees don't have to remember multiple passwords. We also like the fact that employees log on through our company rather than creating passwords on their own, outside our firewall."

BridgeView IT is working to move all its files from internal file shares and Google Docs to SharePoint Online. With all documents in one place, employees will not have to waste time tracking down files, nor will they have to worry about different versions of files in multiple places. "The rich, visual interface of SharePoint Online is also valuable," Glennie says. "Using wikis and other SharePoint features, we can visually direct people to information, so it's easier and more collaborative. Each of our three main departments—Sales, Recruiting, and Operations—can share files, calendars,

distribution lists, and other information critical to teamwork."

Employees are also using Office Communications Online instead of Google Talk, and Office Live Communications to conduct web-based video conferences with colleagues in different cities and with customers who also have the tool.

## Benefits

By taking advantage of Microsoft Online Services, BridgeView IT employees are more productive and the company is more competitive. The company can focus on its core business rather than managing email servers, its email service is far more reliable, and the company avoided spending about $13,000 on a new email system.

**Improved Productivity and Competitiveness**

When the company is using SharePoint Online, Office Communications Online, and Office Live Meeting, BridgeView IT employees will truly have information at their fingertips to better serve customers. "With employees spread between multiple offices, the right person is not always available," Glennie says. "Our turnaround needs to be very fast. Business Productivity Online Standard Suite allows us to find information immediately rather than getting back to candidates and customers an hour or a day later."

**More Focus on Core Business, Rather than IT Expertise**

With Microsoft managing email and other communications services, BridgeView IT is free to focus on what it does best: place IT talent. It doesn't have to install email servers all over the country and constantly maintain and upgrade them. Nor does it have to employ specialized technical staff. "As a nontechnical person, I can add a user very easily using the online console for

Business Productivity Online Standard Suite," Duran says. "Before, we had to have an outside firm do this for us, and it took a day or two to add just one user. We now can be more responsive and help new employees be productive sooner. Microsoft Online Services do not require as much technical know-how, so I'm able to manage our email infrastructure as an operations manager."

**Enhanced Reliability**
Stable, always-on communications technologies are critical to business for BridgeView IT. "We're in the business of communications, and our clients want what they want, when they want it," Glennie says. "Plus, our clients are in technology, and they expect us to use modern, reliable communications technology. We can present a much more professional face to our customers by using Microsoft Online Services."

BridgeView IT has also been able to put up a better front against Internet malware. When the company moved its office space in summer 2010, it had to change the IP address of its on-premises email server, which inundated the company with spam. Moving to Microsoft Online Services eliminated this danger.

**Cost Avoidance of $13,000, Plus Savings of $8,200 Annually**
BridgeView IT avoided the $13,000 cost of upgrading an on-premises email environment, a savings that is critical to the fast-growing company. "We've also been able to eliminate third-party server maintenance fees of about $600 a month, or $7,200 annually, plus the extra hourly consulting rates and $1,000 a year for a third-party backup program," Glennie explains.

"Cash flow is important, and having a monthly bill with minimal costs just makes good business sense," Glennie says. "Moving to Microsoft Online Services has been good for business, any way you look at it."

## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers in the United States and Canada who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:
www.microsoft.com

For more information about Pariveda Solutions products and services, call (720) 932-8046 or visit the website at:
www.parivedasolutions.com

For more information about BridgeView IT products and services, call (303) 532-4700 or visit the website at:
www.bridgeviewit.com

## Microsoft Online Services

Microsoft Online Services are business-class communication and collaboration solutions delivered as a subscription service and hosted by Microsoft. With these offerings, customers can cost-effectively access the most up-to-date technologies and immediately benefit from streamlined communications, simplified management, and business-class reliability and security features. For IT staffers, Microsoft Online Services are backed by strong service level agreements and help reduce the burden of performing routine IT management, freeing up time to focus on core business initiatives.

For more information, visit:
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## Software and Services

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  - Microsoft Business Productivity Online Standard Suite
  - Microsoft Exchange Online
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  - Microsoft Office Live Meeting
  - Microsoft SharePoint Online
- Solutions
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