GROW WEST®

Customer Case Study

CNS Helps Grow West Keep Growing

CNS
Your Partner in Technology

GROW WEST ®

▶ The Company

Founded in 1954 and based in Woodland, the independent agricultural retailer Grow West offers products for more than 50 conventional and organic crops. Previously known as Tremont Lyman, Grow West started with one location. However, the company expanded over the decades to include 15 retail, farm supply and wholesale manufacturing locations, as well as engineering and trucking services. One of the top marketers of agricultural products in the state, Grow West employs over 200 end-users. The company stays active in the local community through organizations like Yolo Food Bank and Future Farmers of America.

▶ The Problem

The Tremont Lyman IT infrastructure never lacked for complexity.

For many years, the Tremont and Lyman branches were treated as separate entities but managed as a single company. Even though Tremont employees and Lyman employees worked in the same building, they used different servers as well as separate internal and external domains.

There was a lot of unique identity in the Tremont and Lyman sectors, but IT runs on robust policies and processes and awareness. That made establishing a central infrastructure at Tremont Lyman difficult for in-house IT staff.

▶ The Solution

Eager for assistance in managing a problematic IT situation, Tremont Lyman hired Capital Network Solutions (CNS) to become the company's managed IT service provider. In CNS, Tremont Lyman gained an entire IT department staffed with trained and certified technicians. Besides the 24/7 help desk support, Tremont Lyman gained the ability to pick the brains of the CNS executive staff.

With anytime access to virtual CIO and Director of Operations Lauren Hermle, Tremont Lyman found a sounding board for IT-related ideas. They could discuss big-picture concepts with high-level CNS staff while leaving the IT management minutiae to an outsourced team of experts. That proved indispensable when Tremont Lyman decided to unite all their brands under a single name: Grow West.

Tremont Lyman engaged CNS early in the process, asking for our opinion on how to accomplish the rebrand. CNS put together several options for Tremont Lyman and with the advice provided, they chose a route that would minimize the impact to the end-user.

▶ The Process

Merging two separate IT infrastructures that serve several hundred end-users spread across 15 Northern California locations is no simple task. "The prep was about two months, and then the migration we did over a weekend," Hermle says. CNS handled most of the extensive prep work offsite, thanks to the installation of remote management software.

"We created a brand-new domain controller and file server under Grow West, and then we created new Office 365 accounts under their new external email domain," Hermle says. "We had to touch every single computer, disconnect it from the old domain, whether that's Tremont or Lyman, and then join it to the new Grow West domain, and then update their emails."

Hermle walks us through the process step by step:

Step 1: The Build

CNS built and configured two new, fully redundant Windows Server 2019 virtual machines with a local domain.

Step 2: The Transfer

Tremont and Lyman file shares, security groups and data were migrated to a new Windows Server 2019 machine.

Step 3: The Configurations

First, we added the new Grow West email domain to the company's existing Office 365 subscription. Then we joined the existing servers to the new domain.

Step 4: The Implementation

All end-user mail-enabled systems were deployed, configured and joined to the new internal domain.

Step 5: The Decommission

Finally, we joined the existing servers to the new domain. At this point, we entered the post-project support phase, as the CNS help desk provided remote assistance to end-users. The entire CNS staff worked on the Grow West project during switchover weekend in January 2019, helping to ensure a seamless migration. After two months of pre-planning, the CNS staff was all-hands-on-deck during migration weekend.

"We started on a Friday around 2 p.m., and then we were here that Friday until about midnight," Hermle says. "Then we were up the next day on Saturday, started around 6 a.m., and went until about 3:30 p.m."

▶ The Result

Grow West emerged a bigger and stronger company, while the company's IT infrastructure became infinitely more efficient. With the entire company now treated as a single entity, the streamlined and more easily manageable system offers a better experience for the end-user. Extensive planning and open communication between Grow West and CNS resulted in a thoroughly smooth transition.