

Company Profile:

BankFirst is a locally owned and operated bank in northeast and central Nebraska with long-term ties to the community. BankFirst offers a variety of personal and business financial products tailored to fit customer needs.

Website: www.bankfirstonline.com

Business Challenge: As a financial institution with strong ties to the community, BankFirst knows first hand that it has a responsibility to protect the personal information of its customers. Bank Regulators think so too. Approximately every eighteen months, Bank Regulators audit the bank, making sure the IT systems that store and access personal information are secure. With eight facilities in five cities spread across the region, ensuring that the systems are upgraded with the latest security patches can be a labor-intensive task for the bank's two-man IT team, requiring them to spend up to four hours in the car for a single maintenance visit.

Solution: BankFirst deployed a remote and automatic systems management solution from Kaseya that allows administrators to monitor all systems on the network and ensure they are patched correctly from a central data center. The proactive systems management strategy ensures that all systems are up and running at all times and are in compliance with the bank's strict internal security policies.

Community Bank Uses Remote Systems Management Solution to Stay On Top of Information Technology Issues.

For obvious reasons, banking is a heavily regulated industry. Compliance is one of the major points small community banks need to consider as they expand their geographic reach and scale operations beyond just a few branches. Audits by the Federal Regulators, state agencies and industry watchdog groups ensure that the public has confidence in the nation's banking industry and that consumers' personal information is protected and secured from fraud.

BankFirst – a regional community bank in northeast and central Nebraska – experienced growing pains as it expanded to eight branch locations in five cities. Its distributed IT environment consisting of more than 100 workstations and 15 servers is spread out across the region, requiring its two-man IT staff to travel constantly in order to keep up with manual systems management, including monitoring, patch management, inventory and software deployment.

"An efficient patch management process was a high priority for BankFirst," said Nick Cleveland, IT administrator, BankFirst. "We were effective in what we were doing; however, we were not where we wanted to be from an efficiency standpoint. Plain and simple, there had to be a better way."

Bank Regulators requires that all financial institutions have a reliable system in place to ensure that all business systems are patched correctly and protected from external threats. BankFirst's chief financial officer Richard Moore knew something needed to be done to continue to ensure the high level of protection demanded by its own internal policies and those of the Bank Regulators. BankFirst needed a new system in place that would continue to protect its most valuable asset – its customers' personal and financial information – and do so in an efficient, cost effective manner. Making the bank's remote systems management strategy more robust and efficient became a top priority.

Proactive Systems Management from a Central Data Center

In an effort to eliminate the distance factor in BankFirst's IT maintenance strategy, the bank deployed a remote and automatic systems management solution from Kaseya that gives its IT administrators complete visibility into every server and PC on the network regardless of physical location. By accessing any system from a central management console, the IT staff can proactively monitor and maintain the IT environment, plugging potential security holes and availability issues before they became a major problem.

"It's a great tool for any Systems Administrator," Cleveland said. "I now know exactly what is on the network and can distribute software updates and patches with the touch of a button."

BankFirst originally investigated several point products but quickly realized that a complete solution like Kaseya that solved multiple needs was a more cost-effective way to go. "Kaseya was exactly what we were looking for," Cleveland said.

Through the Kaseya solution, BankFirst's administrators can actively monitor systems in any of the bank's eight branch offices from the main data center in Norfolk, Neb. When Microsoft issues a new patch, they can first test the software on a machine in the data center and then distribute it accordingly. Patches that normally would have taken days, sometimes weeks to distribute, are now done in minutes. Software deployment is done much the same way. New versions of BankFirst's banking application can be deployed seamlessly in all branches at once, eliminating a phased approach and ensuring that all employees are using consistent software versions.

The Kaseya solution also helps BankFirst track hardware and software inventory, reducing redundant expenditures and allowing the bank to get a better hold over its software licensing strategy. Kaseya continually audits the network and keeps a reliable repository of hardware and software information in a central database. Administrators can easily check processor speed, memory, storage capacity, current operating system and see what software is installed on the hard drive. Administrators can even determine who is accessing certain applications and who isn't to better determine licensing renewals. Kaseya also alarms administrators of any changes to any system – a jump drive for instance – which alerts the bank to any potential data breaches or security risks. The solution also identifies software that shouldn't be on the system such as Spyware or personal software programs.

Visibility Leads to More Robust Security Strategy

By proactively monitoring and maintaining all systems on the distributed network through the Kaseya solution, BankFirst is able to ensure that its customers' financial information is protected, while demonstrating a high degree of systems integrity to the bank regulators. And better yet, BankFirst is able to manage compliance efficiently, without maintaining a mobile IT workforce and without breaking the bank's IT budget.

Administrators are able to monitor and work on systems seamlessly without end users even knowing they are there, ensuring business continuity even during major software upgrades. Kaseya also has a very low footprint, having little effect on application performance. As a result, the IT staff has low visibility with the business staff, an ideal situation for everyone.

Key Benefits

- Customer personal information is better protected, maintaining internal and FDIC compliance regulations
- Reliable availability of banking systems and data improve the productivity of business staff in bank branches
- Central and remote management allows IT staff to automate basic administrative tasks, allowing them to focus on more strategic projects
- Reliable inventory tracking features give the IT staff a better handle on what is on the network, giving them a reliable tool to proactively clean up systems and plug potential security holes

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-- Richard Moore, CFO, BankFirst

"It is important that our administrators are in the office working on strategic projects that continuously allows us to improve the way we do business," Moore said. "Kaseya allows them to stay in the data center instead of on the road manually servicing remote systems."

When issues do arise, the IT staff is able to solve them remotely as well. In most instances, the administrator simply takes control of the affected system and troubleshoots the problem from the data center. Issues that used to take hours to identify and repair because of drive times or miscommunication over the phone, now take minutes.

The bank is also able to conduct training for new software through Kaseya's remote connection. Trainers can gain control of the employee's PC and remotely show them new features and walk them through business processes. This training device makes sure that all employees are using all features provided to them and instills consistency throughout the organization regardless of whether the branch employee is based in Columbus or Wayne.

"Kaseya not only ensures we're up to speed with our customers and the FDIC, the solution streamlines the way we manage our IT infrastructure," Moore said. "Our IT employees are more efficient, our remote systems are proactively maintained and the business staff has reliable access to the tools and information they need to service customers. It's not just win-win. It's win-win-win."

About Kaseya

Kaseya is a global provider of IT Automation software for IT Solution providers and Corporate IT organizations who benefit from deploying Kaseya's Systems management capabilities. Kaseya allows businesses to proactively manage distributed IT infrastructure easily and efficiently with one integrated Web based platform. Kaseya's technology has been deployed on over 1 mm machines in over 25 countries around the world.

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