



White Paper: The business case for email archiving

The business case for email archiving

For businesses around the world, email has become the primary means of communication with people inside and outside of the organization.

Business transactions kick off in the form of an email, most customers use e-mail to negotiate contracts and agreements and exchange invoices and payment information. Email is also heavily used by marketing departments to issue mailshots to customers announcing new offers and special deals and so on.

Yet businesses fail to realize that each email communication sent or received is probably the only record they have of important transactions with a customer or between members of staff. Many organizations underestimate the value of knowledge that is stored in corporate email. According to Osterman research, email contains nearly 75% of the information that individuals use on a daily basis, therefore, the amount of corporate knowledge stored in email is enough to justify its safekeeping over long periods of time.

Businesses, however, are still finding it hard to accept that they need an email archiving solution. Many simply rely on traditional backups to solve the problem – a strategy that only provides a temporary solution.

Research carried out by GFI Software in the UK and US found that 51% and 53% respectively do not use an email archiving solution. Awareness on the importance of email archiving is also somewhat lacking. GFI's research found that in the UK, 30% of SMBs do not feel they are sufficiently informed about email archiving while 36% of SMBs in the US feel they do not know enough on the subject.

Why should a business archive email?

Within a single organization, perspectives on email archiving and email management can vary widely. The legal department, for example, sees email as an essential factor in its discovery responses strategy. Storage, backups, problematic and corrupt PST files, overloaded email servers and performance are the IT department's major concerns. The compliance team is concerned about preservation and control issues while employees want to access to all their email from anywhere in the world to improve productivity.

Whichever way you look at the issue, a company can ill-afford not to archive email because it never knows when and which email it will need at a future date. That email may be a 'to-do' list compiled by sales but it may also be an email that could save a company thousands of dollars in legal fees and fines.

Busch Consulting, Inc.

Information Security & Network Solutions

www.buschconsulting.com – Phone: 808.941.3695 – Fax: 808.545.4005



White Paper: The business case for email archiving

The following are the main reasons why a business needs to archive its email:

Access to old / deleted emails

Traditional backup solutions that restore systems if a business suffers an outage, such as a disk system failure, are no longer sufficient. These backup products do not allow the administrator or employees to easily search through thousands of e-mails to find, for example, the messages outlining the payment information that another company had agreed to. With an email archiving solution management and employees can search for, and retrieve old or deleted emails in minutes.

A perfect example is Quantum Marine Engineering. Their investment in an archiving solution paid off in the eyes of management when a customer had asked in an email to them about the suitability of a component they were using to hook up a piece of our equipment. Quantum's sales force and technicians both were adamant about having replied, saying that what they were proposing wasn't suitable; but no one could come up with the email.

Within five minutes, Quantum's administrator found the email using a keyword search as well as the whole string and conversation. He also discovered the reason why no one could find it in their Exchange mailboxes: The email with the key to the puzzle had been sent through a couple of techs and finally through a department head who no one had included in the original list of possible responders.

Storage problems

The volume of email that is being generated on a daily basis is becoming a problem for IT administrators. As employees send and receive more emails with larger attachments, storage space on the server starts running out. If server quotas cannot be increased, then emails must be stored in PST files on workstations or a network share – creating more problems. With an email archiving solution, all emails are stored off the server yet easily accessible. The problems associated with PST files are also solved.

Legal safeguard / compliance

Legislation in many countries has been amended to include emails as a source of data that needs to be retained for varying periods of time in the event that such information is required in a court of law. Various sectors, such as finance, have their own compliance regulations that need to be followed. The inability to produce email evidence when required in a court case may result in fines, court sanctions and loss of credibility. With an email archiving solution, all corporate emails are stored safely, are tamper proof and they are accessible within minutes making it easier for that company to provide the necessary data and also defend itself in a court of a law or prove it is compliant with the regulations in that country.

Busch Consulting, Inc.

Information Security & Network Solutions

www.buschconsulting.com – Phone: 808.941.3695 – Fax: 808.545.4005



White Paper: The business case for email archiving

Ability to manage / check employees email

Most companies do not monitor what emails are being sent or received by their employees. Although corporate email should be used solely for company business, there are times when management may need to monitor an employee's email activity. With an email archiving solution, management can assign department heads with permission to check on emails being sent by individuals believed to be using company email abusively and / or with malicious intent. Email archiving can prove extremely beneficial in internal investigations or employer/employee disputes.

Choosing an archiving solution

The decision to go for email archiving will be based on the size of the company, storage requirements and legal obligations. In small and medium sized businesses, email archiving is mostly a productivity tool and a means of moving old emails from their overloaded mail servers to a central archive that can store a huge amount of data, reducing dependency on PST files and allowing administrators and end-users to search for and retrieve emails at will.

For enterprise, the above reasons also apply but legal and compliance issues will drive the case for archiving. The ability to access and retrieve emails within minutes without the need to trawl through massive and complex backups is also important.

There are a number of features that businesses need to look out for in an archiving solution. First, the product must have a flexible search engine that gives administrators and employees the ability to search for specific email or conversation threads. The product also needs to have an adjustable retention policy to allow the business to control how and for how long email messages are retained.

Another important consideration is that the database storing the archived email cannot be tampered with. To present emails as evidence in court of law, the company has to prove the integrity of those emails. Finally, you need a software product that is easy to install and is not overly complex. If a business is to allow its employees to search for old and deleted emails the process should be simple enough even to those with limited knowledge.

What should be stored?

An important question! Simply put, there are two options: keep everything or delete everything. Keeping everything is the best option because email is a two-way communication process. Deleting an email does not erase all traces of that communication because at least one recipient would also have a copy. Keeping a copy of every email will ensure that the business's email correspondence will not be used against them.

Busch Consulting, Inc.

Information Security & Network Solutions

www.buschconsulting.com – Phone: 808.941.3695 – Fax: 808.545.4005



White Paper: The business case for email archiving

Companies need to define a retention policy based on the importance of the email being archived. The CEO's email, for example, should be retained for longer periods than that of an office clerk.

One big advantage of archiving is that it reduces the size of end users' mailboxes and also the number of requests for more storage. IT administrators can impose 30- to 90-day storage limits but they should also explain that no email will be lost, it is safely archived and accessible at any time.

Privacy issues

Although email archiving makes perfect business sense, privacy issues may arise in some organizations. Can an employer retain and monitor any employee's email?

Some companies argue that email sent using the company network becomes its property, and therefore management has a right to check employees' mailboxes. On the other hand, privacy rights groups argue that checking an employee's email breaches his right to privacy. Striking a balance is not easy but at the end of the day, it is a question of trust.

Every state, every country has its own rules and regulations regarding email archiving and email use. Companies need to be aware of all of the regulations before setting policy or acting against a worker.

What businesses really need to understand is that email archiving is no longer an expense but a justified cost of doing business and insurance cover against possible legal or compliance repercussions. Companies that use an archiving solution find that the benefits go beyond those they had expected when they purchased the product.

For more information please contact us:

Busch Consulting, Inc
810 Richards St
Suite 600
Honolulu, HI 96813
Telephone: 808.941.3695
Fax: 808.545.4005
www.buschconsulting.com

Busch Consulting, Inc.
Information Security & Network Solutions

www.buschconsulting.com – Phone: 808.941.3695 – Fax: 808.545.4005