H2
ARCHITECTS

Customer: H2 Architects
Website: h2-architects.com
Location: New York City Metro Area
Industry: Architectural Services
Partner: eMazzanti Technologies
Partner Website: www.emazzanti.net

Profile

H2 Architects is a Manhattan architectural design firm that caters to real estate developers, business owners, private individuals and others.

With attention to detail and 40 years combined experience, their innovative designs often delight and exceed clients' expectations.

H2 has relied on eMazzanti Technologies for IT Services and support since 2003.

Software
- Windows 10
- Office 365
- Windows Server 2012 R2

Hardware
- HP Z400 Workstations
- Z-Book Mobile Workstation
- HP ML350 ProLiant Server
- Network attached storage (NAS)
- WatchGuard Firebox M300 Firewall

For more information about eMazzanti Technologies IT solutions visit: www.emazzanti.net

H2 Architects Goes All-in with IT Infrastructure Upgrade

"eMazzanti brought our IT system into the modern world. They know what they're doing and they understand our business. Working with them is like working with friends."

Yungie Hahn, President, H2 Architects

Faced with connectivity problems and aging equipment, H2 Architects (H2) engaged eMazzanti Technologies to completely rebuild its IT infrastructure. With only minor interruptions to operations, eMazzanti replaced H2's network, server, workstations, Wi-Fi, backups and software with modern Microsoft-based technology. The addition of Office 365 and a virtual private network (VPN) enable H2's staff to work from anywhere on a variety of devices. After a positive and pleasant upgrade experience, Yungie Hahn, President, recommends going "all-in" to other business owners considering upgrades.

Business Needs

New York City-based H2 Architects (H2) combines a high level of design with exceptional capabilities to get designs built and finished. Each project demands a unique solution that H2 is able to provide through their thoughtful and highly evolved design sensibility.

"We're not afraid to do new things and figure out how to get it made," explained Yungie Hahn, President. "Our clients are surprised and pleased that we've exceeded their expectations."

Aging Computers

After years of reliable operation, H2's IT infrastructure required an upgrade to ensure efficient and secure ongoing operations. Aging equipment included a 13-year-old computer running Windows Server 2003, workstations, printers and plotter. Staff performed backups manually, but not as often as needed.

"We've been really lucky," related Hahn. "Nothing ever really broke, but our hardware was getting older. It became more and more difficult to get new devices and software to work with it. And, backups are one of those things we just had to have automated."

Cautiously Moving Forward

When Carl Mazzanti recommended that H2 upgrade its entire network, Hahn was open to the idea, acknowledging that she had been cautious about upgrading before.

"As architects, we use our computers heavily, and we didn't want to make changes that could interrupt our work."

The comprehensive upgrade plan included the following:

- HP Z400 Windows 10 Workstations with dedicated graphics

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- High-performance Z-Book Mobile Workstation
- HP ML350 ProLiant Server running Windows Server 2012 R2
- Network attached storage (NAS) and Automatic QNet backups
- WatchGuard Firebox M300 Firewall
- Faster Wi-Fi
- Wireless access points on three floors

The addition of Office 365 and a virtual private network (VPN) would enable Hahn, her partner and staff to work from anywhere.

Solution

Continuous Operations

Beginning in August, 2016, eMazzanti's engineers worked on-site for three days installing equipment and coordinating with vendors. With the new network operational, they scheduled a follow-up visit to set up the VPN and handle outstanding items.

H2 maintained operations during the entire upgrade process, although adapting to new configurations and software caused minor disruptions. "It's what I expected, but not because of anything eMazzanti did," reported Hahn. "We had to adjust our ways of working to the new software."

Momentary interruptions occurred when staff switched over to a new computer or email became inaccessible for a short time.

"It was totally fine," explained Hahn. "Even though my software wasn't exactly the way I wanted it yet, I could get on and work. Throughout the upgrade process, eMazzanti's engineers were very respectful, and did things efficiently."

Office 365 Organization

Excited about new productivity tools, Hahn welcomes the organization, automation and multi-device, anywhere access of Office 365. When received, emails automatically route to project files to keep communications sorted and easily accessible.

"Office 365 keeps things organized on our phones, iPads and laptops or if we're using someone else's desktop," she offered. "We have a lot of meetings, so it's critical that if we make appointments, they automatically show up in our calendar. The same thing applies when entering contacts."

Automatic Backups

If data problems surface, architects must be able to recover the files that they modify daily, making the performance of reliable backups essential. "Drawing work can be tedious detail, and it would be hard to lose a day's work, or even several hours," explained Hahn.

H2 decided not to back up to the cloud. "We have many gigs or terabytes of data and backing up to the cloud would be expensive for us," Hahn explained. "So, we're backing up our server on-site to QNet on NAS."

Enthusiastic Reception

A positive reception by Hahn's staff wrapped up a pleasant and successful upgrade experience. "Everyone is enthusiastic because it's newer, faster and better," she reported. "And, it's a pleasure working with eMazzanti's helpful and polite engineers."

With all-new hardware and software, eMazzanti continues to work closely with Hahn to finalize the remaining details and settings. "Everything is working. It's just little things we have left to work out," she explained. "I'm confident that it will be done."

Benefits

Faster and More Secure

H2's network and workstations now operate at much faster speeds. "Starting up the machines that we're working on is practically instant vs. waiting a few minutes and going to get a cup of coffee before the upgrade," related Hahn.

In the age of increasing data security threats, H2 no longer relies on luck to avoid data theft or loss. Its WatchGuard M300 firewall is specifically engineered to defend small businesses against attacks that are no less fierce than those targeting larger organizations.

With a new, commercial-grade firewall and automated backups, H2's labor-intensive, proprietary designs and client data are much more secure.

Increased Productivity

Office 365 and the new VPN enable H2's staff to work productively from home or clients' facilities as needed. "We're going to be better organized, even when we're not in the office," stated Hahn. "And, we'll be able to do more drawing work offsite if required."

Increased productivity shortens project timelines and enhances customer satisfaction. "We'll be more streamlined," stated Hahn. "And, that definitely benefits our clients in terms of the time it takes to complete a project."

All-in is Better for the Business

After replacing H2's entire IT infrastructure in one upgrade, Hahn offers some advice for other business owners. "If you're going to upgrade, do it right so your equipment can last," she stated. "We did it all at once to have our systems set up to be more beneficial for the business."

"I'm impressed with the engineers who came on-site and I'm happy with the equipment that they recommended," she concluded. "They're familiar with all the programs we use, the kind of video cards we need and the data. I would always recommend them for architecture design firms. They definitely get that."

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