



# **The Headache of Managing an Email Service**

## **Top 10 Reasons to Outsource**

White Paper  
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## How will you deliver secure, high quality email and messaging services to your users?

Email is a critical business application that contributes to employee efficiency and productivity and is the basis for internal and external communication. Ensuring that your email service offers the most current tools such as collaboration, secure messaging and mobile device support (e.g., iPhone, BlackBerry) may require costly on-staff technical expertise or a trusted consultant. Managing and implementing a secure email system for your business can be complicated and labor-intensive.

In an April 2007 report, The Radicati Group confirms that email is a mission critical application for most businesses. However, an email system requires a stable infrastructure and is the most prone to vulnerabilities such as spam, viruses and malware.

The real question is not whether but *how* you will provide an email service that maximizes employee productivity and efficiency. Will you do it in-house or outsource it? And will you offer a full-featured service with guaranteed levels of availability, spam and virus protection, support for different access methods, and collaboration tools, or will you provide a bare-bones, basic service?

The decision to provide email yourself or outsource it depends on how you answer the question about email service quality. While a basic email package can be implemented in-house, providing users with high service levels and a full-featured offering is a much more demanding proposition, requiring:

- Redundant equipment
- Staffing to manage and monitor the email and network infrastructure
- Overtime or holiday coverage to ensure availability around the clock
- Constantly-updated virus and spam protection for your users and network
- Technical support staff to field employee inquiries
- Storage administration to handle the growth of mailboxes and protect data against loss
- On-going engineering and product development costs to keep service offering up to date

You should consider both the risks and benefits of delivering email as you decide whether to manage your messaging solution in-house or outsource:

In-House Email	
Accountability	Your IT staff has complete control of the service delivery and support.
System design and maintenance	System architecture, availability and maintenance managed internally.
Product choice	Email architecture hardware and software solutions are owned by the business and service upgrades managed internally.
Outsourced Email	
Messaging expertise	Outsourced messaging providers have experience in managing and delivering the most current email and collaboration solutions.
Service guarantee	Email is always available and maintenance downtimes are limited to off-business hours.
Technical service and support	Email is important to employees. Messaging providers deliver the email service as well as technical support for administrators and users.

Providing a reliable, full-featured and secure email solution is the cornerstone to increasing collaboration and employee productivity. If this is your objective, there are strong arguments for outsourcing email, as long as the provider offers email service with the above characteristics. In fact, there are at least ten good reasons for outsourcing email.

## **1 Outsourcing delivers a rapid, successful deployment.**

Outsourcing delivers a benefit from the onset of service by accelerating the deployment phase.

If you plan to implement an email service in-house, you will need to install, configure and test a complete infrastructure to deploy the email service. To provide high service levels, this infrastructure must include:

- Redundant server infrastructure with no single point of failure and load balancing/failover capabilities
- Redundant or highly available storage for mailboxes
- No downtime migration of employee data
- Email software or appliances with ample data storage
- Integrated and up-to-date spam and virus protection
- Management, monitoring and administration infrastructure
- Technical support infrastructure to handle employee calls/queries
- A specialized abuse team to ensure mail delivery and fight spammers

Implementing this in-house can be expensive, will take significant time, and requires specialized staff. With an outsourced solution, deployment of an email service is rapid, as the hardware, software, storage, and administrative infrastructure already exists and you are simply tapping into it. Data migration is seamless and managed by the email service provider.

## **2 Outsourcing reduces capital expenditures.**

Implementing an email service in-house will require capital hardware expenditures including:

- Hardware and software licenses for redundant email, anti-spam and anti-virus servers
- Additional web and application servers for web-based email
- Redundant (mirrored or RAID) storage for mailboxes, with sufficient capacity to meet near-term storage requirements

In addition, you will need the necessary data center infrastructure, including network bandwidth, power supply and rack space as well as monitoring/management software.

Outsourcing the email service eliminates these up-front capital expenditures; you pay a service fee based on the number of email accounts and features when you need the additional boxes. This model is referred to as 'pay as you grow', which allows a more efficient use of resources.

## **3 Your staff stays focused on the core business.**

Employees expect a full-service email solution with desktop, laptop and mobile device access and support. However, email is likely not one of your core competencies. Running a highly available, full-feature email service requires a good deal of dedicated staff time, including;

- Experienced email administrator(s) to set up and maintain the system
- Technical support staff to handle customer questions about email service
- Storage and system administrators to handle the infrastructure
- Ongoing engineering and product development to keep messaging service competitive

The fully-loaded costs of these personnel are significant. Even if you are using existing staff to perform these functions, you may be diverting time from their primary job function of providing additional IT services that run your business. If you are outsourcing your email today, make sure your current provider is offering the best service and support.

Datamation reported average or median annual salaries for the following information technology professionals in 2007:

- Database Administrator - \$86,790<sup>1</sup>
- Systems Security Administrator - \$70,500 - \$99,750<sup>2</sup>

## **4 Spam and viruses require constant vigilance.**

The email threat landscape is changing regularly. Viruses, directory harvests, denial of service attacks, mail bombs and other forms of spam dominate the list of threats. The Messaging Anti-Abuse Working Group (MAAWG) distributed their October 2007 *Email Metrics Report* citing over 82% of all message traffic as abusive email. And The Radicati Group estimates daily spam emails will rise to 209 billion messages, or 74% of all email sent in 2008.

Spam protection and security require a multi-layered defense with constant signature updates that do not impact quality of service. In many cases, employees may want to control the sensitivity of the spam filters, or identify specific 'approved' senders. Furthermore, spam and virus protection needs frequent software upgrades. Spam and malware are not problems you solve only once; you need to dedicate resources to the fight on an ongoing basis.

If you are managing an email service in-house, you have to address security and abuse issues:

- Spam is costly in terms of bandwidth and storage, while viruses can easily overload and shut down your servers.
- Your employees will complain and increase calls to your support staff if spam is out of control or their systems are infected with viruses.

If you outsource your email service, choose a service that maintains up-to-date virus and spam protection, and dedicates the time and energy to staying current with the threat landscape. Generally this service offering is bundled with the email account, and therefore a fixed cost.

## **5 A highly-available email infrastructure optimizes uptime.**

To delivering a high-quality, highly available email service all downtime should be minimized, both planned and unplanned. Doing so requires an email infrastructure with redundancy and failover capabilities that protect the service from individual failures, deployed on a fault-tolerant network. The mailbox storage must

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<sup>1</sup> Datamation, *IT Salary Watch: Database Administrator*, September 12, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Datamation, *2007 Salary: Systems Security Administrator*, October 16, 2006.

be redundant. The platform needs full backups of all email data, with recommended offsite storage to protect from a site-wide problem, and the ability to recover data rapidly in the case of failures.

Building such an infrastructure takes both time and expertise. By partnering with a mature email service provider, you have instant access to a highly-available email infrastructure deployed in a data center with physical security and around-the-clock administration. You can examine the vendor's track record in providing downtime-free service and their service level (SLA) guarantee to get a good idea of the availability you can expect for your service. Experienced email vendors generally guarantee 99.9% availability including planned and unplanned downtime. Providing this kind of service and availability in-house is difficult and time-consuming.

## **6 Keep up with business communication trends.**

Experienced messaging vendors are constantly raising the bar on what to expect from an email service. It's no longer enough to offer a basic email service. Your employees want and expect:

- Full-featured email with synchronized, anywhere access – Outlook, web mail or mobile email
- Device support for BlackBerry, iPhone and other emerging technologies
- Instant, 'push' email delivery to PDAs, smart phones and other mobile devices
- Collaboration tools and complementary services including shared calendar, shared address book, online storage, secure email and archiving

Your email service must keep pace with changing communication trends for maximum productivity. If you are providing the service in-house, you have to keep investing time and effort into the email infrastructure and upgrades – and rolling out new features without disrupting service or reliability.

An outsourced email provider already does this – their core business is software as a service (SaaS) email, so keeping current with changing technologies is part of what they do. They take care of the engineering behind the changes and implementation of new feature implementation without service interruption.

## **7 Your email costs are known and predictable.**

If you choose to outsource email, the cost of email services is known, fixed, and predictable. It is also very affordable when compared with the true cost of providing email service in-house.

It can be difficult to determine the actual costs of providing email service in-house. The Total Cost of Ownership includes:

- Up-front capital expenditures on infrastructure, service and storage
- Ongoing server and storage upgrades to support growing usage/volumes of data
- Ongoing staff costs in server, storage and email administration
- Ongoing staff costs in technical support

These numbers do not factor in the hidden costs of lost productivity if there are any email service problems. With outsourced email, your true costs are known and fixed.

## **8 You retain control over the service.**

One of the essential reasons for doing email in-house is that you want to retain control. But today's outsourced email systems are designed to integrate with your business processes and systems. Web-based management consoles give you immediate control over the service and managing user accounts, permissions and set-up is fast and easy.

## **9 Did we mention compliance?**

Most businesses cannot ignore compliance issues. Industry-specific regulations specify data security, availability, protection and retention requirements that you may need to observe. Your email system will need to support these requirements. Here again, having an outsourced email solution means that your messaging provider is investing the resources to do this, not your own internal staff.

## **10 Improve your business image and customer experience.**

This tenth reason is potentially the most important of them all: by outsourcing, you can provide a full-feature, high-quality email service that is always available. This means your employees are productive and your customers and vendors can always get in touch with you.

Can secure, fully-featured email make your business look better? Sure. Can an unreliable service make your other services look worse? Again, yes. Email downtime, spam or viruses will make employees, customers and vendors suspicious about the care you put into your other business services as well.

## **Summary**

You have the choice of supporting your email service in-house or outsourcing it. You may think that you can leverage existing infrastructure and expertise to add email support in-house, and indeed this is a viable option for many companies. But if you want to offer full-featured, secure email with broad device support and high reliability levels, outsourcing is a much more attractive and compelling option.

Outsourcing lets you concentrate on your core business and delegate email service delivery to someone else whose expertise is email. This helps you keep current in security, features, and high availability without a continuous investment in time and resources beyond the cost of email hardware and software.

And if you do plan to outsource or already outsource, be sure that your email provider has a proven track record and can satisfy the ten reasons described in this paper.

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## The Everyone.net Advantage

Everyone.net ([www.everyone.net](http://www.everyone.net)), based in San Jose, California, delivers highly reliable, secure, hosted email and messaging solutions for small and medium businesses as well as distributed enterprises worldwide. The company provides the advantages of highly available email without the expense or complexity, enabling businesses to focus on what they do best.

Everyone.net's email solution is built on a highly scalable infrastructure and includes advanced services such as mobile push email, collaboration tools, POP/IMAP, comprehensive anti-spam and virus protection as well as value-added services such as online storage, registered email and archiving.

Managing over 6 billion messaging connections per month, Everyone.net is trusted by business clients including Wolfgang Puck restaurants, True Value Hardware and Kaplan University.

Visit us at [www.everyone.net](http://www.everyone.net) and find out how we can help you save money and increase employee productivity.



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