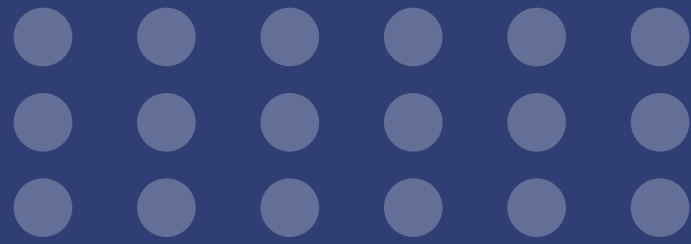




Optima Manages Growth and Boosts Profitability with GlobalSCAPE WAFS





For architect David C. Hovey, FAIA, founder and president of Optima, Inc., his commitment to excellence has not been without effect. In just 30 years, the Chicago-based firm has received 33 design awards and has earned recognition as one of the nation's top builders. Excellence has led to success. Success has led to growth. And just as with every business, growth has led to challenges.

In 2004, Optima began its first major project in a new market—Scottsdale, AZ. By 2006, the satellite office was fully-staffed. The large volume of data shared between Chicago and Scottsdale was causing daily business interruptions with serious productivity and economic impacts.

Time for a Change.

Enter Daniel E. Miller, Director of IT. The former Corporate MIS Manager for multi-billion dollar Ty, Inc.—best known for their Beanie Babies® brand—was hired to implement a new IT infrastructure that would equip Optima's designers for uninterrupted workflow.

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**FILE → OPEN → GET
COFFEE.**”

“On my first day, there was already a \$40,000 proposal for an MPLS [Multi Protocol Label Switching] upgrade on my desk. It was believed to be a necessary expense,” Dan said. “The situation was critical,” he added. “Multiple systems were crashing daily as a result of the large at-

tachments and CAD files, scattered and decentralized between the Illinois and Arizona offices, which were taking an average of 7 minutes to open across the network. Official procedure was FILE → OPEN → GET COFFEE.”

Optima's network was not archaic by any measure. Each office was equipped with a dedicated T1 connection and file sharing was enabled by an IPSec VPN. Autodesk Buzzsaw had also been implemented for managing subcontractors. Nonetheless, the daily business interruptions caused by IT failures, slow file access, and frequent rework made the demand for a new approach obvious.



The Solution.

Thinking that an appliance-based system could be the answer, Miller briefly evaluated the leading accelerator on the market. “A demo and a quote, but that’s as far as it went,” Dan said. The total investment would be more than \$26,000. In lieu of making such a costly purchase so quickly, Dan decided to keep looking. In August of 2006, Dan found what he was looking for in an unassuming 2 MB downloadable trial of GlobalSCAPE WAFS.

“I had the 30-day trial downloaded and installed in 2 hours,” Dan explained, “and we were seeing results by the very next day.” GlobalSCAPE WAFS is a small, easy-to-configure software solution that led to big improvements in Optima’s business. “We are in our second year using WAFS and we’ve never looked back.”

Instead of increasing bandwidth or accelerating data transfers, GlobalSCAPE WAFS optimizes the network by actually decreasing the overall network traffic. Upon deployment, files are copied to each site. From that point on, using byte-level differencing, only the changes to files are sent over the network, which minimizes the overall traffic volume. Because changes are instantly mirrored in real time between the Chicago and Scottsdale servers, and the files are truly local, users can access the most up-to-date files at LAN speeds. “With GlobalSCAPE WAFS,” Dan said, “latency and chattiness—the key causes of slow downloads—are not even a topic anymore.” With average projects totaling over 60 GB of data and individual CAD files topping 30 MB each, byte-level differencing has made a significant impact on Optima’s productivity and bottom line.

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The Bottom Line.

According to Dan, “The biggest impact has been the real-time access to project files.” Each remote file open was averaging 7 minutes, and the save/close procedure was no faster. Not only is this a frustration, but Optima is keenly aware of how time affects the company’s bottom line. Without even touching his calculator, Dan was able to recite, “At our billable rates, 25 architects each opening and closing just one file a day lose 15 minutes per day, which adds up to over \$52,000 in losses each year.” If they open and close more than 1 file a day, the savings are even greater.

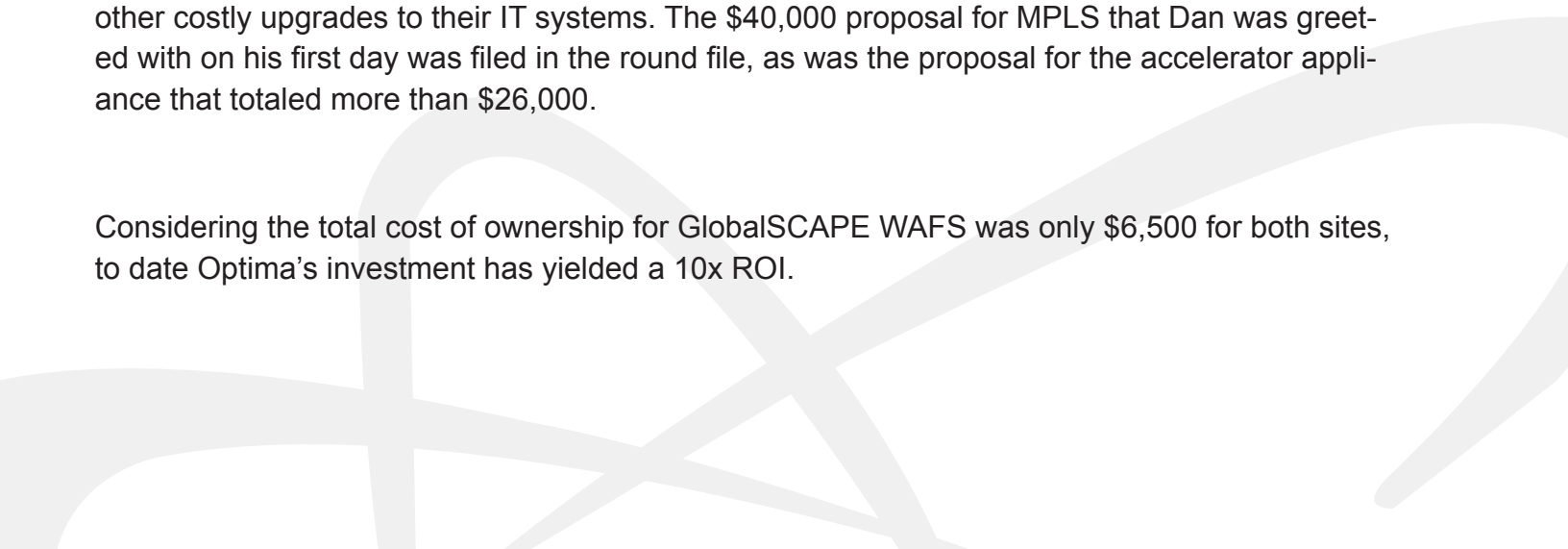
Over the next year, Optima began to notice more of an effect on their budget resulting from GlobalSCAPE

“ We knew we had a problem that was affecting our productivity, data integrity, and causing employee frustration. We never would have guessed we would have found such a reliable and cost-effective solution. ” -Michael W. Kanzler, CFO

WAFS. The need for temporary reassignments, travel costs, and employee relocation was reduced by over \$10,000. As Dan explained, “Simply put, GlobalSCAPE WAFS enabled us to collaborate where previously we could not.” Using GlobalSCAPE WAFS, Optima could maximize productivity by transporting files, not people, and save on travel expenses.

Optima has realized many other economic benefits as well, starting with the ability to forego other costly upgrades to their IT systems. The \$40,000 proposal for MPLS that Dan was greeted with on his first day was filed in the round file, as was the proposal for the accelerator appliance that totaled more than \$26,000.

Considering the total cost of ownership for GlobalSCAPE WAFS was only \$6,500 for both sites, to date Optima’s investment has yielded a 10x ROI.





Welcome Surprises.

For most IT professionals, dealing with the problems end users have with file access goes with the territory. So the first time Dan heard, “I accidentally deleted a critical project file...” it was hardly unexpected. What was unexpected, however, was the ease of its retrieval. GlobalSCAPE WAFS maintains file versioning by default. As a result, Dan had restored the file in a matter of minutes.

That was only the first of several added benefits for Optima. GlobalSCAPE WAFS maintains file coherence with real-time file locking support so users can be assured

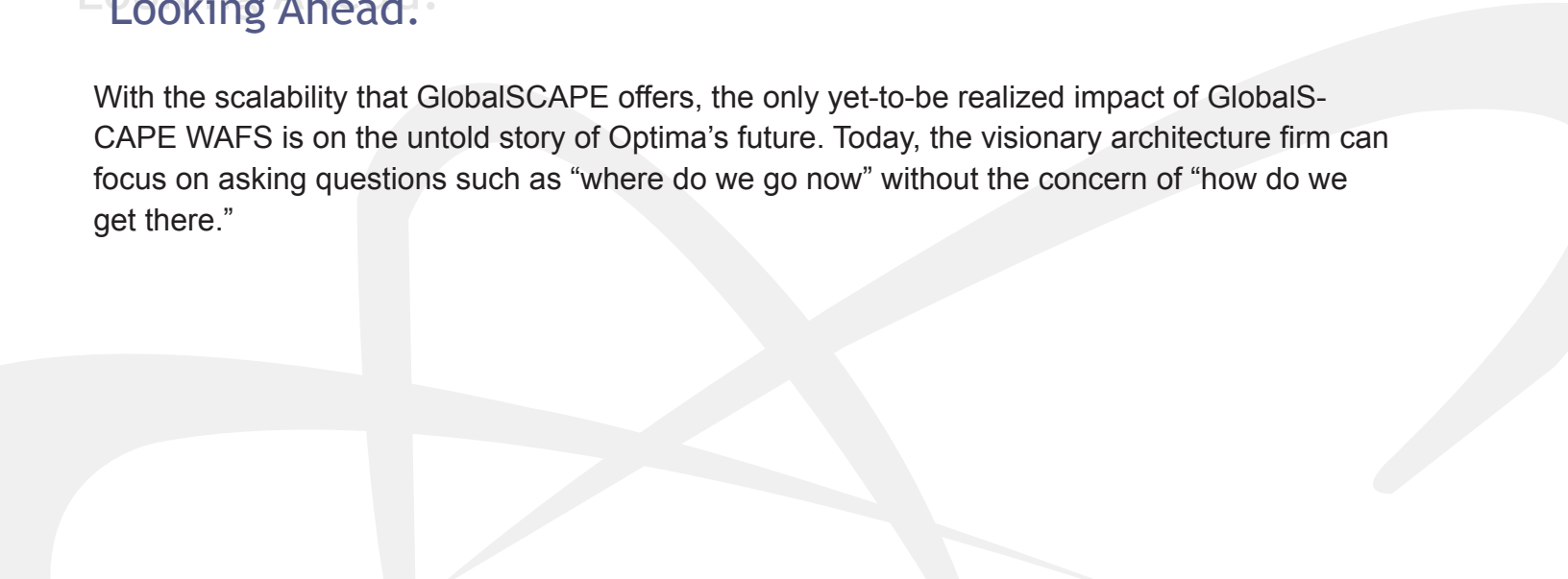
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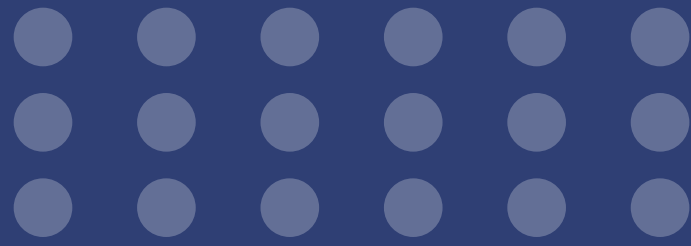
they are always working on the most current version and rework is virtually eliminated. In addition, WAN outage support means that everyone can keep working with the data even if connections are lost.

Drive lettering is also kept consistent at each local site. Applications that require full-paths, such as AutoCAD Xrefs, can interact with files mirrored by GlobalSCAPE WAFS without error. For Optima, that means an architect’s time is never wasted re-pathing external references or data connections.

Looking Ahead.

With the scalability that GlobalSCAPE offers, the only yet-to-be realized impact of GlobalSCAPE WAFS is on the untold story of Optima’s future. Today, the visionary architecture firm can focus on asking questions such as “where do we go now” without the concern of “how do we get there.”





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