

Virtual Staffing Agency Stays Connected With ShareDirect



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— Gayle Buske, Principal, Team Double-Click

The Client

Team Double-Click, Inc. is a virtual staffing agency that provides virtual assistance to small and home-based businesses. Established in 2000 by Gayle Buske, Team Double-Click offers its clients cost-effective solutions to inflexible bricks-and-mortar staffing by staffing virtually with some of the best office professionals the world has to offer.

As well as proudly representing an international pool of elite virtual professionals, Team Double-Click is something of a virtual office itself. The company is officially headquartered in Lodi, Wisconsin, but staff members are also scattered throughout North America; in California, New Mexico, Florida, Maine, and Idaho.

The Challenge

Although Team Double-Click staff members have maintained a close-knit, productive organization despite the geographic distances, they were beginning to experience difficulties making up-to-date human resource data available quickly and conveniently to all staff members. “We use Excel spreadsheets to capture information on our several hundred virtual professionals and the needs of the clients they service,” Gayle explained. “Scheduling, assignments, payroll, accounting, resource allocation... We need all that information, and more, at our fingertips throughout the day in order to do our job.” And since each staff member contributes a different piece to the puzzle, it’s important that the spreadsheets be accessible to all members at any time. The spreadsheet files are too large to email back and forth between members, and in any case, “We don’t want to have to request the most recently updated file every time we need it. That wastes everyone’s time. We needed a system that just made the files available, instantly and conveniently.” She was also aware that email was not the most secure method of transferring data, and was concerned about putting Team Double-Click’s sensitive human resource data at risk.

Gayle began researching alternatives to email, but discovered that many of the options available were too costly and complicated or simply didn’t work correctly. She had used Microsoft’s SharePoint in the past and liked it, but with its high price tag and complicated set-up, it was not designed for a smaller organization like hers and those of her clients.

She also tried GECTS (Global Electronic Commerce Transactions System), which allowed Team Double-Click to use Microsoft SharePoint in conjunction with a web server. “It was expensive and it didn’t work very well for us,” she admitted.

Then she signed up for a free trial with Groove Networks, a slick “virtual office” collaboration tool built on a peer-to-peer platform. She found it easy to use and she liked the polished user interface. However, Groove had a lot of “bells and whistles” they didn’t need, and when they discovered that this solution would cost them about \$300 per user, she decided to keep looking.

The Solution

"I finally found Laplink's ShareDirect through Google," Gayle said. She had her staff download the software and try it out, and they were immediately hooked. When asked to describe why ShareDirect was such a great fit for her organization, she said, "I liked a lot of things about it. First of all, we were looking for a peer-to-peer solution; something that was lightweight and could give us the flexibility we needed. This way we can add or remove people to the network quickly and easily, without requiring technical assistance. Secondly, we needed something that would let us share documents through firewalls, without the hassle and security issues involved in opening ports. At Team Double-Click, all of our computers are behind firewalls." Gayle continued, "We were also impressed with the professional look of the software. It was very polished and simple to use. Really, it does only two things. It lets you turn your regular folders into folders that can be shared securely and privately with select network members; and it lets you chat with them in real-time using secure, private instant messaging." She acknowledged that ShareDirect didn't have a lot of the extra features that Groove Networks offered, but she and her co-workers found that they really didn't need them. They were just glad that they could get the file sharing system they needed at a fraction of the price of the Groove system.

The Result

Gayle and her colleagues can now access up-to-date information any time they want, without emailing requests for the latest updates, and without waiting minutes for large files to download. They have all shared into a central folder where they know they can find the information they need and download it quickly.

An added benefit is the potential for ShareDirect to make life easier for Team Double-Click's many virtual office professionals. "Now, we are encouraging our virtual office professionals as well as our clients to use ShareDirect to share documents with their remote associates. It's easy to understand and easy to explain, even to non-technical users" said Gayle. "It's not difficult to explain what the software does and how it's going to make their jobs simpler." And because ShareDirect doesn't require businesses to purchase special servers or set up complicated permissions, Gayle believes it's ideal for working relationships of shorter durations, such as the contract work Team Double-Click professionals perform for the company's clients.

Gayle said, "ShareDirect's flexibility and simplicity is a perfect fit for Team Double-Click. It's easy to use and easy to understand." Her job is to help others keep their businesses as lightweight, cost-effective, and productive as possible, and by using this innovative peer-to-peer folder sharing application, she has a competitive edge in meeting these objectives.

Find more information on ShareDirect, or purchase the product online at www.laplink.com, or call a sales representative at **800.343.8080**.