

Panzura and Workspot Help Drive Mead & Hunt's Rapid Growth, Simplify IT Infrastructure

Meet Mead & Hunt - a multi-disciplined engineering and architectural firm operating for more than a century. With 900 employees across 35 offices, the firm utilizes design applications such as Autodesk Civil 3D and Revit among others on a regular basis. Mead & Hunt has been experiencing rapid expansion into new locations, including a new headquarters facility. This created challenges for their growing, distributed, workforce. Each location became a small island creating issues when project team members in different locations needed to collaborate, and share data. Mead & Hunt CIO, Andy Knauf realized that he needed a solution that would enable real time collaboration and greater productivity, while also simplifying the overall IT structure and reducing associated costs.

CHALLENGE: SUPPORT BUSINESS GROWTH OBJECTIVES WHILE CONTROLLING INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS

The company expanded its business footprint and showed a pattern of steady growth, including adding several new offices at a fast pace. This ongoing expansion required new equipment (servers, racks, networking, etc.) to be acquired, installed, configured, and tested at each new office. Not only did this result in significant equipment costs, but it was disruptive and expensive for the IT department to send personnel to each remote location to install and manage the IT infrastructure. The firm was committed to finding an IT solution that would allow them to fulfill its growth objectives, provide them with the opportunity to bid on projects in any location, and hire architects, engineers, and project managers from beyond the typical 50-mile radius. Mead & Hunt also wanted to provide its employees the flexibility to work from anywhere, yet collaborate effectively in a common data environment.

SOLUTION: SIMPLIFICATION WITH PANZURA AND WORKSPOT

Previously, when a new location was established, a rack of new hardware had to be delivered to the remote location. This hardware typically would consist of a few Windows servers and a SAN solution along with the requisite networking. All this then had to be configured to work together to support the local user community, and to provide backup and replication of data back to company headquarters (HQ). This required an IT person from HQ to be onsite for several days to complete the installation, and then continue to tune and adjust the setup for a few weeks after that.



Mead & Hunt is a successful American based consulting, design, engineering and architectural firm, providing clients with award winning solutions for 100+ years from its more than 35 offices across the US.

Industry: Consulting, design, engineering and architectural planning with an emphasis on innovation and client relationships

Enr 500 Ranking: #119

Employees: 900+

Customer Since: 2013

Cloud: Microsoft Azure

Partners: Microsoft, Panzura, & Workspot

Competition: None

Panzura Product: Freedom NAS, Freedom Collaboration

Workspot Products: Workspot Cloud Workstations, Workspot Discovery Cloud

Number of Sites: 35 with plans to continue expansion.

Pain Points: Mead & Hunt needed improved data sharing for remote team members while simplifying the overall IT structure with minimal associated costs.

Panzura Solution: Created centralized cloud storage, remote data sharing and improved user "file open" experience, reduced IT costs and simplified time and efforts involved in opening new offices.

Workspot Solution: Transformed the power user computing experience by providing cloud workstations that deliver better-than-physical-workstation performance, while generating new levels of flexibility and agility that position the firm for accelerated growth.

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With Panzura and Workspot, the process has been completely transformed. Now it involves acquiring a Panzura Freedom Filer, a UPS, Workspot cloud workstations in Microsoft Azure, and the necessary LAN/WAN networking equipment for that office. The project data required for that particular location can be pre-cached onto the filer and then the entire configuration tested (while still at HQ). The Panzura configuration process is much simpler and can be accomplished in just a couple of days versus the week-plus required previously. Additionally, Panzura resolves the file locking problem that occurs with multiple remote users working on the same project at the same time.

Workspot provides CAD engineers and designers with access to cloud workstations, which use the NV series GPUs, all delivered from Azure. These power users now access their cloud workstations from any location, and they can use much lower cost devices than before. The solution can be deployed in days and easily scaled across cloud regions to accommodate business demand. Expensive servers, which become obsolete every few years, are no longer needed, and physical workstation refreshes are history. Having experienced recent hurricanes and close encounters with wildfires, Mead & Hunt is now also better prepared for a business continuity event by having additional Workspot cloud workstations in alternate Azure regions, ready to be activated in the unlikely event of an outage.

BENEFITS

- With Panzura and Workspot, IT is simplified and resources can be reallocated to high-value projects. With the centralization of project data into the Azure cloud, Mead & Hunt has seen significant reductions in storage costs because hardware previously required for both backups and disaster-recovery is no longer necessary. Less equipment in each remote office also lowers energy consumption and the associated costs.
- With Workspot, new revenue opportunities can be pursued anywhere in the world without having a physical office. Users often experience performance that is better than physical workstations, and they are able to collaborate with distributed project teams in real-time, producing overall greater productivity.

“Over the last 2 years we have increased headcount by 50% to 900 people and reduced IT spend by \$250k with the Panzura and Workspot joint solution. We are now operating as One collaborative team across our company increasing productivity across all employees,”

- Andy Knauf, CIO, Mead & Hunt



- Panzura Freedom Filer with Global Read/Write protection ensures that multiple users can reliably work on files within the same project without fear of stepping on each other. Copying files is no longer necessary, so everyone knows that they're always working on the most recently updated files. For existing offices or new ones, data access and security, controllable costs, and ease of use are now standard expectations.

By taking advantage of modern, built-for-the-cloud era solutions from Panzura and Workspot, Mead & Hunt has been able to accelerate the company's expansion in a secure and cost-efficient manner.

“I've worked in IT at Mead & Hunt for more than 29 years and when an issue of this magnitude is solved, I like to call it a holy grail moment. I've only ever said that twice before, and the Panzura & Workspot solution makes it three. That's how great this solution is to the industry. My IT team is happy, the CAD design engineers are happy, and I get a consistent cost every month.”

- Andy Knauf, CIO, Mead & Hunt

