PolicyPak
WHAT YOU SET IS WHAT THEY GET.

FIRST SUPPLY®

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- Adrian Reed,
Network Administrator, First Supply

Wholesaler finds PolicyPak Simplifies Moving to Firefox from Internet Explorer

Situation

First Supply, a leading main channel wholesale distributor providing industrial customers and building contractors with an extensive line of products and services, can trace its history back to the 1890s when three tradesmen pooled their resources to create a wholesale plumbing supplies business.

Today First Supply features manufacturer product lines in the plumbing, heating, air conditioning, builder, waterworks, pump/well & septic, industrial and municipal markets. First Supply is made up of 29 operating facilities serving Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, and Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Supporting its 650 employees across multiple locations provides a challenge for the company's IT group. The company wanted to move its employees from Microsoft Internet Explorer to Mozilla Firefox to provide users with a more robust browser. The

company also sought a better environment for administering group policy.

"We had a great many policy settings to implement," says Adrian Reed, Network Administrator at First Supply. "We needed a tool to help us deploy global policy settings across the board for everyone in our company spread across four states and nearly 30 locations."

Solution

After researching its options for a policy administration tool, First Supply chose PolicyPak. "We looked at Google Chrome, but it didn't have the enterprise features we needed," Reed says. "PolicyPak was the only policy tool we found that provided the level of granularity that we required to manage Firefox."

Prior to full deployment, First Supply performed pilot testing across a subset of its employees.

"The testing showed that from an administrative standpoint, PolicyPak was easy to use, and very

efficient," Reed says. "The pilot testing also showed that our users loved it. All of the feedback was incredibly positive. So we swiftly moved to a full deployment."

Benefits

Deploying PolicyPak has provided First Supply with a number of benefits, including ease of deployment, easier network administration, rapid responses to browser updates, a great user experience, and strong support.

Ease of Deployment

First Supply was delighted with the ease of deploying PolicyPak. "Deployment was easy," Reed says. "The systems administrator doesn't have to learn a whole new set of tools or different applications. You can just go into your existing Active Directory and implement your organization's policy."

Integration with existing resources was also a breeze. "PolicyPak simply integrates with what you already have," Reed says. "We didn't need to allocate any new resources, so it's practically free, from a resource perspective. You just tie it into your existing Group Policy, and it simply works as an add-on. This is a huge help to how quickly you can get it set up and running."

Easier Network Administration

PolicyPak has made life easier for network administrators at First Supply. Starting with the ability to seamlessly apply via group policy, and continuing on with the ability to manage even more pesky applications.

"We used to get daily calls from users getting notifications that they needed to update things like Java or Flash Player," Reed says. "Users would say, 'I tried to update this application, but now it's prompting me for administrator credentials.' With

PolicyPak we can specify that users simply aren't prompted for updates. Then we simply quietly upgrade our applications when we're ready."

Reed also appreciates the fact that while on the one hand PolicyPak provides the deep granularity that First Supply sought, the product is also extremely easy to use. "Some products require network administrators to go through a steep learning curve in order to use and troubleshoot a product. With PolicyPak there is no learning curve. It's just very intuitive and easy to use."

Rapid Responses to Updates

First Supply appreciates the tight industry monitoring PolicyPak performs, and the rapid responses it provides when browser or application updates require action.

Reed recalls the initial confusion that was caused after Java released a major update that caused a change in security settings—disrupting the policy settings it had in place.

"Everyone's default Java settings ended up being set very high by default, and we started getting calls that users could no longer access key sites," Reed says. "So I went out and looked, and sure enough PolicyPak already had an update ready. We just adjusted settings and pushed it out. No more problems."

Great User Experience

A big part of the pilot testing that First Supply conducted with PolicyPak was aimed at seeing how well it was accepted by users across the company. "The browser is central to how many of our people access information," Reed says. "And while we have plenty of power users, we also have people who know very little about computers and they would have been lost without the settings and shortcuts they were used to. Our ability to switch over from Internet Explorer to Firefox was very much

dependent upon how well our PolicyPak pilot testing fared with such users."

As noted earlier, the user response to the pilot testing was, in Reed's words: "incredibly positive."

First Supply used PolicyPak to lock down the settings it wanted to be uniform, while leaving users free to adjust settings that weren't specified through policy. This meant users had an even better experience than they had with Internet Explorer. Users also appreciated the single sign-on functionality of Firefox to Active Directory resources. These integration settings are delivered to Firefox by PolicyPak.

"PolicyPak facilitates single sign-on through Firefox for intranet sites, according to our policy settings, allowing users to avoid repetitive authentication prompts" Reed says. "Handling credentials is very important when moving users to a new browser. It allowed users to move to Firefox without disrupting their accustomed user experiences. And for us, it definitely saved us a lot of trouble calls."

Strong Support

Reed has been impressed with the strong support he's enjoyed when working with PolicyPak—including its substantial library of video presentations.

"I once had a question and Jeremy Moskowitz [PolicyPak CEO] answered it personally," Reed says. "Jeremy is a Microsoft Group Policy MVP so that definitely adds credibility to what they provide in their online library of videos and FAQs. Whatever question you might have, chances are good that you can find the answer in their online library. You can just watch a video and then do it yourself."

About PolicyPak

PolicyPak is an enterprise software company with a focus on managing and securing end-points. Our software solves complex and challenging IT security and settings management problems, while providing affordable solutions for businesses of all sizes. PolicyPak reduces desktop management and helps ensures standardization, while increasing end-user productivity.

PolicyPak Software has been included in the Top 20 most promising Citrix Solution Providers for 2015, according to Enterprise Technology Magazine CIOReview.

For more information or a trial, visit us at www.policypak.com or give us a call at 1 (800) 883-8002.