

Manufacturer's Network Now Dependable and Up-to-Date

A New Hampshire manufacturer called MLANS for help in February, 2008. The general manager was frustrated after trying several IT consultants who did not work out. The network uptime was only 80% to 90%.

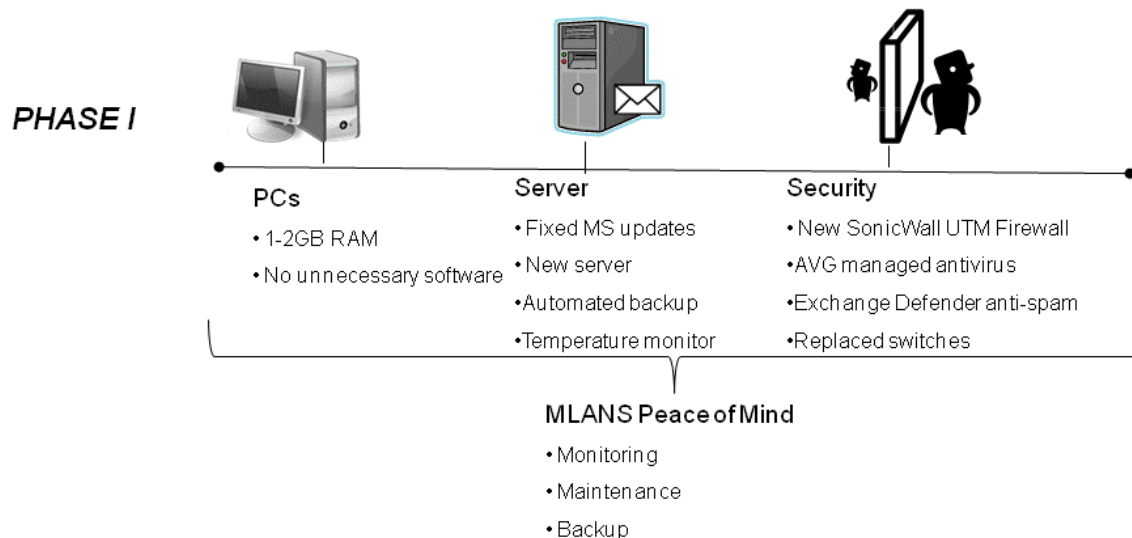
MLANS tackled the problems in two phases, occurring over a sixteen month period.

Network Improvements Yielded Near-Perfect Uptime

An audit of the network revealed a number of problems:

- The company had one server that was old and running slowly. The backup was not backing up all the data. It was rated for half of the 110GB of data. SQL and Exchange used all the memory, leaving no room for the ERP manufacturing software, MAX Exact. Microsoft updates had failed and were not being installed.
- The Computer Associates antivirus software was interfering with the line-of-business applications and Internet access.
- The GFI anti-spam was so unmanageable that employees were trying to turn it off.
- Many PCs were underpowered and needed more RAM memory to do their jobs. They had unnecessary software.
- Internet access was slow and there were network errors. The software firewall was not working well.

Starting in March, 2008, MLANS took a four-pronged approach to these problems, dealing with the server, the PCs, security, and monitoring and maintenance:



1. **PCs** - To improve PC performance, MLANS installed one to two gigabytes more memory on the PCs, and removed unneeded software.
2. **Server** - To get the server running properly, MLANS addressed the problems on the server by fixing the failed Microsoft update and replacing the old server; it was not cost-effective to clean up the software on the server. MLANS installed an automated backup system with adequate capacity. Because the server room was running at over 100°, the client made procedural changes (leaving the AC on in that part of the building and leaving the door open) and installed a temperature monitor.

3. **Security** - To improve security, MLANS replaced the network firewall with a SonicWall UTM (Unified Threat Management) appliance, installed managed AVG antivirus software that would not interfere with operations or other software, and installed Exchange Defender anti-spam managed service. MLANS replaced the old switches.
4. **Monitoring and Maintenance** - To ensure that the network would continue running smoothly, MLANS installed the *MLANS Peace of Mind* remote monitoring and maintenance service. With Peace of Mind all-inclusive, flat-rate pricing, many small issues were addressed over time.

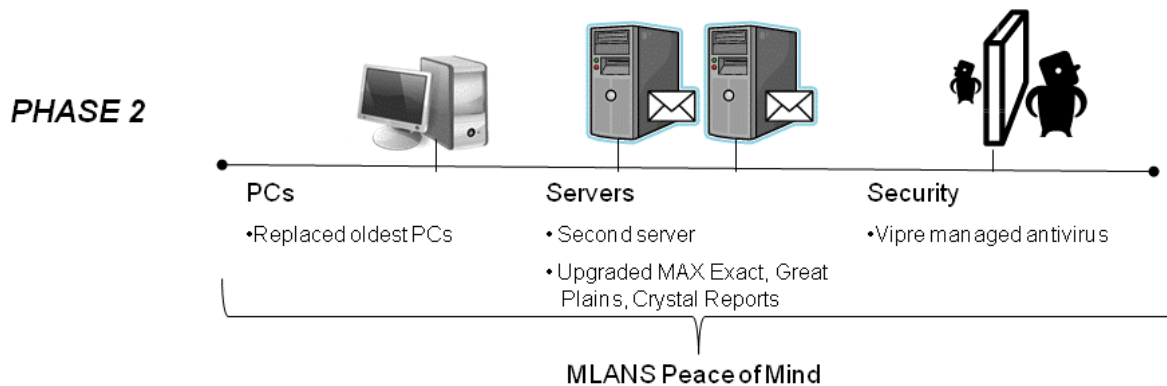
As a result of these changes, the manufacturer's general manager estimated that the uptime had improved to 99.9%. Because of his confidence in the network, the manager was able to begin planning his retirement and a succession to a new manager, which he completed in 2009 after a major software upgrade.

Software Upgrade Went Smoothly With No Interruptions to Operations

While the first year's improvements were occurring, the manager identified new goals in March, 2009.

- Replace the oldest PCs.
- Clean up the messy setup for the network equipment that was a legacy from previous IT consultants.
- Perform a major upgrade of the MAX Exact manufacturing software, the Great Plains accounting software, and the Crystal Reports formats. The manager needed MLANS to coordinate a team approach with support from several software experts. It was essential that the company continue running without interruption during the upgrade. The daily material requirements plan (MRP) is the basis for operations.

MLANS completed the network cleanup and PC upgrades, and then tackled the software upgrade. At that time, MLANS installed Vipre antivirus software which has been proven to be very reliable.



Preparing for the upgrade, MLANS installed a second application server - , a Dell quad core with 4GB RAM and Windows Server 2008 32 bit, SATA RAID, and Microsoft SQL 2005 – and balanced the load between the two servers. The team successfully completed the software upgrade in June with no interruptions to daily operations. The network now continues to run well, with minimal interruptions.