



Gordon Eaken,
director of Information Systems
for the Village of Hoffman Estates, Ill.

THE POWER TO DO MORE

The Village of Hoffman Estates, Ill., uses Gateway to simplify IT maintenance and implement projects it never thought possible.

Gordon Eaken, director of Information Systems for the Village of Hoffman Estates, Ill., was a one-man IT maintenance operation when the village hired him 10 years ago. Brand, age and quality varied greatly among the city's desktops. With more than 300 employees, maintaining the city's myriad desktops was cumbersome.

Having no IT staff, Eaken knew he could drastically improve his productivity if he set a standard for all desktops. Two years after taking his job, he searched for a standard to provide the performance, hassle-free service and price that would empower one man to run IT for a city. That standard became Gateway. Eaken purchased 50 Gateway desktops and saw rapid productivity improvements.

"It was a challenge," Eaken said. "Gateway supported me significantly in that effort — getting the new technology out there, in place and supported."

Being a one-man IT crew, Eaken said he dreaded enduring another three-month bidding process when the time came to purchase new machines. He already knew he wanted to continue purchasing Gateway desktops.

Eaken's Gateway representative helped him prepare a case for elected officials that would allow the village to enter a master license agreement, which waived the bidding process for future desktop purchases and drastically lowered prices.

"We had to do some paperwork. The mayor signed it. Once we were on that schedule, certain price points were available to us on different models," Eaken said. "We just used that process from then on."

Before the agreement, Eaken said computers were often used until they could no longer be fixed.

Now the village has a consistent four-year replacement cycle and uses a range of Gateway desktops.

"People find comfort in the fact that we have these standards. They know we have Gateway, and if an employee has to fill in for someone else in another department for a week, they know they're going to be working on a similar system," Eaken said.

Eaken recently purchased the village's first Gateway server, and he is considering including more in his next Gateway purchase.

Partnering with Gateway greatly simplifies the ordering and maintenance process for Eaken. The agreement also enables the village to implement technology where it wouldn't have otherwise been possible.

Finding a Way

Hoffman Estates recently partnered with Gateway on an emergency operations center for the Police Department's aging office building.

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Customer Profile

Agency: The Village of Hoffman Estates, Ill., Department of Information Systems

Mission: Provide timely IT maintenance and computer deployment to support village employees in their work for citizens.

Technology Objective: Standardize on one high-performance, low-cost desktop provider with service that significantly reduces maintenance time for village IT staff.

Gateway Solution: The Village of Hoffman Estates standardized on Gateway desktops, which allow the village IT staff — which was once only one person — to be more productive and secure better pricing.

ROI: By standardizing on Gateway, IT efficiency surged in the village, and the resulting low prices enabled it to implement a four-year desktop replacement cycle. Partnering with Gateway, the village also actualized projects it initially thought it couldn't afford.

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Gordon Eaken, director of Information Systems, Village of Hoffman Estates, Ill.

The village plans to replace the building in the next three to five years. Naturally the department wasn't allotted much money to set up a new center in the old building, but Eaken's IT staff — now a six-person team — did the cabling for a scaled-down emergency operations center the department can use in the meantime.

"We wanted to put some sort of computer systems in it," Eaken said. "Initially we were going to have everybody who had a laptop grab their laptop and bring it over during emergencies. But then my Gateway representative talked about this portable classroom mobile cart that Gateway sells. It has 14 laptops in it. The laptops charge while they're in the case, and it rolls."

Eaken persuaded the police chief to secure enough funding to lease the mobile cart and buy a SMART Board through Gateway. The SMART Board, a large screen on wheels, displays data from a laptop.

"We connect it to our network and project our GIS system onto it, so if there's an incident in the village, we can get aerial photos of our village and drill down to look at the buildings on the SMART Board. The GIS also will snap pictures of the incident as people are deployed. You can capture those JPEGs so you essentially have a pictorial history of the event," Eaken said. "It's worked out well for us. We do practice sessions over there, where we set up the laptops and fire everything up as if an incident were about to happen, and test everything."

Gateway's portable classroom has a wireless access point and printer, and it can be set up in 15 minutes, said Eaken.

"We've trained a lot of people on how to set it up. Even the policemen over there who are on shift know how to do it. That was an interesting project for us with Gateway," he said. "They helped us solve something we didn't think we had the money to solve."

In the Loop

Eaken said his Gateway representative keeps him current on Gateway developments.

"He would give us a timeline and say, 'These units are coming out in September, and then these are coming out in June. These are the features that will be rolled out in the next model,'" Eaken said.

The information helped the village plan three years into the future and judge whether it wanted to refrain from certain purchases in favor of buying later when new features would be released.

"It was sort of an inclusive feeling. We felt like we understood where Gateway was going, and we could go there with them," Eaken said.

Serving IT Professionals

Eaken said he saw a dramatic rise in efficiency when he switched to Gateway desktops. Standardization allowed him to focus his repair skills on just one high-performance brand name. The change slashed repair turnaround time and boosted productivity.

Gateway certified Eaken and his staff to repair their own desktops, which means Eaken can order replacement parts without redundant troubleshooting with Gateway telephone support personnel.

"It saves us a lot of time and effort," Eaken said. "And it just gets the desktop back where it should be much quicker."

Eaken is one of many government IT leaders who stagger desktop purchases throughout the year. He said when Gateway releases a desktop model, he can count on it being available for the next 18 months, which coincides perfectly with his purchasing schedule.

"I know what I can expect from Gateway, and they know what to expect from me. It has made for a much better relationship," Eaken said. "We've stuck with them, and it has worked out well for us."



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