



CASE STUDY

Briggs Freeman Sotheby's International Realty



A solid IT foundation moves real estate into real relationships.

Briggs Freeman Sotheby's International Realty is intimately acquainted with the neighborhoods of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex area. The company has been part of the community for over 50 years, successfully connecting people and serving them in their real estate needs. Since its inception, the company has continuously focused on finding and developing the best sales agents possible and providing extraordinary service to clients. "Our philosophy is to deliver a luxury experience to each of the firm's clients, no matter the price point of their homes. It is our belief that clients do not represent transactions, but relationships," explains Robbie Briggs, President and CEO. "It requires being connected with the community, supporting its growth, and handling all business and all situations with integrity and professionalism."

These days, however, relationships are more technology driven than ever, and although Briggs Freeman had its finger on the pulse of the right locations to help people buy and sell property in D/FW, it also wanted to anticipate and meet the technology needs of those (increasingly tech-driven) people.

"GXA had the technical support expertise and capacity to help improve Briggs Freeman's IT infrastructure in a timely manner. GXA's consultants speak the language of both business and IT and had the business acumen necessary to link our company's strategies to IT strategies."

Mike McMahon, COO of Briggs Freeman



Key Challenges and Issues

In 2010, **Briggs Freeman Real Estate** joined the Sotheby's International Realty system. The newly formed company, Briggs Freeman Sotheby's International Realty, positioned itself for a growth explosion. But the expectation for growth also meant the firm needed to assess and expand its IT resources and infrastructure to cope with:

- Skyrocketing support and maintenance demands
- Increasing dependence on marketing and sales automation tools
- Increased bandwidth demand from its high-performing sales agents and creative marketing department
- Unsatisfactory security for the amount of confidential information exchange

Faced with an IT infrastructure that failed to meet their business needs, Briggs Freeman sought a technology partner with a deep understanding of their business, a partner who could **“link... growth strategies to IT initiatives.”**

They chose GXA Network Solutions, an advanced service provider who gets business and shares Briggs Freeman's philosophy of relationships over transactions.



Solutions

A bottom-line, strategic appraisal

In home buying, foundation problems can wreak havoc in a transaction; in that vein, GXA set out to suss out any problems with Briggs Freeman's IT foundations, as well as to determine what that foundation needed to support.

GXA quickly identified a common but serious problem: a disconnect between their business vision and their IT operations. Fortunately, GXA specializes in bridging that divide, by building an IT structure that fully supports the customer's desired growth and business goals.

GXA began by organizing and facilitating meetings with all company departments. Whether talking to top management or existing IT people, GXA wanted to understand and map out their top-level business needs and strategies. It also needed to understand department-specific needs, such as marketing needs and sales goals.

Once the initial, exhaustive assessment was done, GXA formulated a technology plan that would build an unshakable foundation to support the agency's business.

Moving forward, GXA continues to provide on-going Virtual CIO services, helping Briggs leverage the best technology to meet the evolving business challenges in the real estate industry.

Building capacity

The first element of the Briggs Freeman



technology plan was architecting network and Internet capacity to meet the demands of a growing, increasingly mobile organization. Old network, server and workstation equipment needed updating and capacity was fully maxed. As a result, access to network resources was slow, and employee productivity was being constrained by these logistical shortcomings.

● **The capacity to handle growth**


- **500% Internet bandwidth increase** – with no cost increase. By engaging an expert vendor, GXA facilitated implementation of robust fiber Internet, which immediately improved speed and power.

- **Boosted employee productivity across departments.** GXA upgraded the network/server infrastructure, creating a strong, stable, performance-oriented environment.

Implemented greatly enhanced marketing automation and tools. Given Briggs' focus on developing an empowered marketing department, GXA outfitted the team with better tools, applications, automation and storage. GXA identified key technology vendors, built out the resources to add cutting-edge business applications, and implemented the solution personally.

The capacity to handle IT support needs

- 24/7 rapid response support services. GXA formulated an adaptive two-tier support system to provide the most bang (fast technical problem



resolution) at the lowest buck.

>> Recruited, hired and placed an internal IT resource. GXA provides ongoing management, training and support – relieving Briggs Freeman of that burden – while ensuring they have dedicated personnel to meet immediate needs.

>> Implemented offsite support resources, coupled with 24/7 monitoring and maintenance, so that issues are proactively detected and resolved.

Mobilizing technology

With 80 percent of personnel out and about during the day, a reliable, always-on and secure mobile access solution was needed.

- Instant, continuous client communication. GXA ensured always-on access to email and business applications, so agents could respond and address client needs 24/7.
- Rapid document exchange. GXA implemented a system to enable Briggs Freeman to exchange key documents rapidly, facilitating faster real estate transactions.

Securing (technological) relationships

From mobility needs come increased security needs. With most agents working remotely and always on the go, Briggs Freeman needed to beef up security and build a multi-layered secure infrastructure to protect key company assets.




- **Secured and simplified information exchange.** To work and collaborate effectively, Briggs Freeman employees needed to be able to quickly, easily and securely exchange critical media with clients, colleagues, offsite vendors, freelancers and remote offices. GXA set up multiple secure remote access solutions to enable protected, seamless sharing of data and applications.
- **Protection of company assets.** Particularly with so much mobile, offsite access to company resources, it was crucial for GXA to set up a multilayered security infrastructure.
- **Ensuring continuation of business services in case of a catastrophic event.** GXA designed, implemented and maintains a robust backup and disaster recovery program.

Conclusion

Briggs Freeman Sotheby's International Realty needed an IT infrastructure as sophisticated, pedigreed, respected and geared towards growth as the name of the company itself. Tasked with providing mobility, security, redundancy, and major power and speed, GXA Network Solutions was able to provide the realty group with the kind of technology synergy that's as on-the-go, smart, mobile, scalable and hardworking as Briggs Freeman's agents are. The result? Seamless interfacing among agents; and between agents and clients, top speed and power, and endless potential.

With GXA handling the IT "location," the realty's agents can get back to using technology to enhance



relationships and make their deals.

Executive Summary

Challenge

Briggs Freeman Sotheby's International Realty needed an IT infrastructure that was mobile and powerful, so that they could instantly get the research, comps, and outreach to clients that ensures powerful, repeat loyalty in the real estate industry.

Solution

GXA Network Solutions installed top-notch, scalable, powerful systems that can easily be upgraded, updated, and bolstered. GXA also now handles all of Briggs' IT needs, freeing up the realty group to concentrate on real estate.

Results

Seamless interfacing and powerful, sophisticated systems mean the sky's the limit for this luxury realty group.

About Briggs Freeman Sotheby's International

Realty Briggs Freeman Sotheby's International Realty is Dallas' luxury leader, with more than 190 agents in five offices located throughout the Metroplex and access to the global Sotheby's network including more than 11,000 agents in 600 offices worldwide. For more information, go to briggsfreeman.com



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