**Customer Story**
Transportation Industry

# Quality Distribution Moves Faster With Chromebooks, Google Apps and Ericom

**As North America's largest bulk transportation company, Quality Distribution supports more than 3,000 employees who must have excellent connectivity whether on the road or in a regional office.**

The recent implementation of the Google Ecosystem and Ericom's HTML5-based remote access technology empowers QDI employees with Chromebook access to Windows applications and desktops, and provides enhanced collaboration and productivity tools, from anywhere and from any device.

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*Cliff Dixon*
*Vice President of IT*
*Quality Distribution, Inc.*

**Quality Distribution**

### INDUSTRY
Transportation

### CUSTOMER
Quality Distribution, Inc.

### PRODUCT
Ericom® PowerTerm® WebConnect and Ericom AccessNow

### CHALLENGES
- Expand the level of collaboration between its employees
- Enable a "Bring-Your-Own-Device" (BYOD) environment
- End the reliance on Outlook and PCs
- Enable IT to deliver services to any mobile device without adding to the IT management workload

### SOLUTION
- Move to an environment based on Gmail and Google Apps and
- Roll out Chromebooks for access to Google apps and data through the Chrome browser
- Deploy Ericom AccessNow to ensure access to existing Windows legacy applications from Chromebooks, iPads, virtually any device with an HTML5 browser

### BENEFITS
- Happier users – It's now possible for users to work from home with their own PC, on the road with their smartphone or in an Internet café
- Users can quickly access email and all applications through Google Chrome
- Better use of IT expertise – IT can deliver innovation and make the user experience better
- Hassle-free hardware

# "*Going Google saves thousands of dollars year over year on IT costs*"

**Q**uality Distribution, Inc. comprises a family of transportation companies and services including Quality Carriers, QC Energy Resources, Quality Transload, Quality Bulk Logistics and Boasso America. Quality Distribution is a certified "Responsible Care" partner.

## Unwieldy software environment cramps IT and users

Quality Distribution, Inc. (QDI) has more than 125 small offices and 3,000 truck drivers across North America. In 2009, the company began to look for ways to expand the level of collaboration between its employees, but found that options were restrictive in their legacy environment.

The legacy, on-premise software environment did not foster easy collaboration, communication or access to applications. Users were constrained by a company policy of a 100 MB inbox limit, and redundant messages with attachments took up valuable space. This caused delays in email access until a user could clean out his or her inbox.

QDI had centralized IT services years ago with a private cloud infrastructure running from the company's Atlanta data center. Despite those efforts to be more efficient, the IT department spent a disproportionate amount of time managing servers and supporting the 2500 Blackberrys. With driver turnover around 50 percent, the Blackberry support issue was particularly onerous and costly, says Cliff Dixon, QDI's VP of IT.

"I wanted to enhance the collaboration environment for a long time and I couldn't afford it within our Microsoft environment," Dixon observes. As well, since QDI operates on a franchise model, Dixon wanted to enable a "Bring-Your-Own-Device" (BYOD) environment so that IT could deliver services to any mobile device without adding to the IT management workload.

## The move to online apps

In late 2010, QDI began an 18 – month project to move to an environment based on Gmail and Google Apps. First, Dixon wanted to end the company's reliance on Outlook and PCs, which were increasingly difficult to maintain. A primary goal was to purchase hardware that would support Google Chrome, the company's browser of choice.

## Chromebooks and Ericom

Google's new Chromebooks, Web-only laptops that access applications and data through the Chrome browser instead of installed on the machine, were intriguing to Dixon and team.

"I felt that Chromebooks would be a really good fit for our environment because they're easy to use and do not require much IT involvement," Dixon says. While today a small percentage of QDI employees are using the Chromebooks, the goal is to have an environment with a majority of the devices running Chrome OS.

A significant challenge to the Chromebook implementation, however, was ensuring access to Windows legacy applications, including Microsoft Office (Excel, Outlook, Powerpoint, Publisher, Word) and logistics applications such as PowerSuite, AP Quick Inquiry and GL Account Activity.

QDI hired Cloud Sherpas, Google's 2011 partner of the year in the enterprise, to help deploy the Chromebooks and solve the problem of legacy application access. Cloud Sherpas recommended Ericom Software, which provides HTML5-based application software solutions called PowerTerm WebConnect and AccessNow. Ericom allows managed access to any Windows application and desktop through the Chrome browser. As a true zero client, AccessNow easily turns any HTML5-compatible browser or device into an enhanced remote (RDP) client, instantly connecting the device to Windows applications and Windows desktops from PCs, laptops and mobile devices (e.g., Chromebook, iPad / iPhone, Android, RIM Blackberry / Playbook and locked-down PCs) — even remotely — without installing Flash, Java or any other software on the client.

"A key part of implementing Chromebooks is that you have to let users work on applications they've been used to working on," Dixon said. "Ericom was the first company to provide HTML5 access services, so that really made Chromebooks a valid option for us."

Because many QDI documents were created in Microsoft Word and not yet moved to Google Docs, Cloud

Sherpas developed a Chrome extension through which these files could be opened in an Ericom-enabled remote desktop.

## Google apps

The next step was moving to Google's online productivity suite. Dixon had performed a cost-savings analysis between Google Apps and continuing in the private cloud, and found Google Apps to be less than half the cost of Microsoft Exchange with quite a few perks, including constant updates and 25 GB of inbox storage. At the end of 2010, QDI saw an opportunity to begin the transition to Gmail and Google Apps. The IT team piloted the platform with the help of Cloud Sherpas.

After three months, Dixon knew that Going Google was the right move for QDI. "Google could seamlessly connect all of our locations and all of our drivers from anywhere, without intensive IT support," he says. Google Apps is also helping support the company's goal of BYOD. "We wanted to implement a system that could be used on our end users' personal choice of mobile or tablet devices without heavy IT involvement."

Cloud Sherpas held a number of training sessions for QDI and provided users with helpful tips and tricks to help them become accustomed to the new system.

## The payoff of Going Google: People-first technology

Going Google has allowed QDI to improve collaboration and save thousands of dollars year over year on IT costs. Most importantly, employees are much happier and more productive with easier-to-use technology and a host of new online tools.

1. Happy users. Previously, employees



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had to go through a VPN to access their email, and they could not use any device they wanted. Now, with Gmail, they can be at home with their own PC, on the road with their smartphone or in an Internet cafe and quickly access email and all applications through Google Chrome. Inbox size limitations no longer delay send and receive processes. Plus, employees have access to new apps, such as Google Chat and Google Sites, to make it easier to communicate and share information with colleagues.

2. Better use of IT expertise. The IT staff is also seeing the benefits of the new Google environment. Instead of monitoring servers and managing tedious updates, they can deliver innovation, through, for example, creating new Google forms or Sites. The renewed IT focus on making the user experience better delivers a much stronger business-oriented ROI for the future. "Quality has performed an IT reboot, we've challenged our IT employees to make their jobs be more proactive in implementing

solutions the company benefits from and spend less time reacting to issues caused by system problems."

3. Hassle-free hardware. Finally, the steady transition to Chrome OS is decreasing hardware spend that used to go toward purchasing and maintaining expensive Windows PCs. Through remote desktop and virtualization technology, users can access all the tools they need through the simplicity of the Chrome browser and Google Apps. Moving forward, QDI will have the capability to replace PCs as needed with the low-cost Chrome OS devices and/or enable employees to use their own laptops and devices to access Gmail and other Apps. "Working with Cloud Sherpas and Ericom has really allowed us to do everything we had wanted to accomplish with Chromebooks," Dixon said.

While QDI is still at the beginning of its journey with Google, so far, employees are working faster and are no longer hampered by old, cumbersome systems. "People who complained at the beginning are the same people I hear from now and tell me that they really like Google Apps once they gave it a shot," Dixon said. "They're excited to to collaborate in ways they couldn't before, and they're seeing the benefits of the product as a whole, not just focusing on small differences between Google Apps and their legacy system."

### Ericom – Access Done Right

Ericom® Software is a leading global provider of Application Access, Virtualization and RDP Acceleration Solutions. Since 1993, Ericom has been helping users access enterprise mission-critical applications running on a broad range of Microsoft® Windows® Terminal Servers, Virtual Desktops, legacy hosts and other systems. Ericom has offices in the United States, United Kingdom and EMEA. Ericom also has an extensive network of distributors and partners throughout North America, Europe, Asia and the Far East. Our expanding customer base is more than 30 thousand strong, with over 7 million users. For more information about Ericom and its products, please visit http://www.ericom.com

**ERICOM**
ACCESS DONE RIGHT

**North America**
Ericom Software Inc.
231 Herbert Avenue
Closter, NJ 07624 USA
T +1 (201) 767 2210
F +1 (201) 767 2205
Toll-free 1 (888) 767 7876
Email info@ericom.com

**UK & Western Europe**
Ericom Software (UK) Ltd.
11a Victoria Square
Droitwich, Worcestershire
WR9 8DE United Kingdom
T + 44 (0) 845 644 3597
F + 44 (0) 845 644 3598
Email info@ericom.co.uk

**International**
Ericom Software Ltd.
8 Hamarpeh Street
Har Hotzvim Technology Park
Jerusalem 91450 Israel
T + 972 (2) 591 1700
F + 972 (2) 571 4737
Email info@ericom.com

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