

**ELITE CASE STUDY**  
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LAW FIRM MIGRATES FROM E-CONNECT TO IN-HOUSE  
ENTERPRISE AND REAPS REWARDS



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# GRANT & EISENHOFER P.A.

## LAW FIRM MIGRATES FROM E-CONNECT TO IN-HOUSE ENTERPRISE AND REAPS REWARDS

### ACHIEVING SUPERIOR ROI THROUGH OWNERSHIP

Grant & Eisenhofer P.A. is one of the nation's leading contingency-based litigation boutique firms that concentrates on corporate governance and securities litigation and other complex class actions, including antitrust litigation, false claims/wage & hour litigation and portfolio monitoring. In more than 100 cases over the past 10 years, the firm has achieved stellar results for its institutional investor clients.

In 2006, firm management decided to upgrade its accounting and billing system from an off-the-shelf, midscale application to Elite® Enterprise to keep pace with its growth. At the time, the firm lacked IT resources and the infrastructure to deploy and maintain Enterprise internally, so management opted for Elite's hosted solution, E-Connect.

E-Connect was a logical step as it allowed the firm to transfer its numerous application programming interfaces (APIs) with key third-party programs, such as Metastorm®, Business Objects® and nQueue Billback®, which was important to help automate workflow and keep the headcount low.

Yet the Finance and IT teams eventually felt the limitations of a shared outsourced database to keep up with growing business demands. COO and CFO Nick Pournader and Director of Finance Michelle Kuropatwa quickly recognized the need to bring the financial and practice management system in-house.

"Since 2005, we have experienced a 325 percent growth rate and have seen the complexity of our business operations grow dramatically as a result," says Nick Pournader.

For example, G&E has an annual multi-billion dollar fiduciary management responsibility associated with its class action settlement trust and escrow accounts. Between its escrow management and internal financial operations, the Finance team is managing thousands of financial disbursement transactions each month. Clearly they needed an automated and reliable system that can handle these transactions, as well as provide comprehensive reporting capabilities.

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*"By taking Enterprise in-house, we were able to reduce our financial systems support costs by 40 percent per annum."*

**Michelle Kuropatwa**  
Director of Finance

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There was no doubt that Enterprise had the power and functionality to manage these demands, but the team needed more control and accessibility to the application and database.

"Bringing Enterprise in-house was more reliable and provided direct access to the database for enhanced and faster reporting functionality. Plus we calculated the overall cost savings of hosting the system internally rather than ongoing E-Connect monthly fees. By taking Enterprise in-house, we were able to reduce our financial systems support costs by 40 percent per annum," shares Kuropatwa.

### VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT SMOOTHS MIGRATION

Director of IT Will Cash largely credits the firm's infrastructure upgrade for the smooth migration from E-Connect to in-house Enterprise. The IT team moved to a virtualization environment for its network, servers and storage. This meant the firm went from 36 servers with 18 separate instances of SQL to 60 virtual machines stretched across seven servers with only one instance of SQL.

As a result, virtualizing Enterprise was a much easier process according to Cash, particularly considering how complex the system was.

"We had aces in the hole because of the infrastructure we implemented prior to the migration, our testing plan and team," says Cash. "The bigger challenge was pointing all the existing third-party APIs to the new in-house server and ensuring the new environment was functioning properly before we went live."

### GRANT & EISENHOFER P.A.

The 120-attorney, three-office law firm represents institutional investors, both domestic and foreign, in securities class actions, corporate governance actions and derivative litigation, antitrust litigation, false claims/wage & hour litigation and portfolio monitoring.

The firm has recovered approximately \$12 billion for shareholders in the last five years and was cited by RiskMetrics for securing the highest average investor recovery in securities class actions of any U.S. law firm in 2008. G&E has been named one of the country's top plaintiffs' law firms by the *National Law Journal* for the past four years.

### MISSION

To migrate E-Connect to in-house servers in a virtualized environment.

### BENEFITS OF MIGRATING ENTERPRISE IN-HOUSE

- More functionality and flexibility with third-party applications
- Reduce costs in supporting financial systems by 40 percent
- Better able to enhance business processes, control upgrade path and integrate new applications

To address this challenge, the team implemented a two-phased migration process to allow for extensive testing. For the first migration, a copy of the Enterprise database was created in order to validate it in a virtual testing environment while E-Connect was running as normal in parallel. The team spent about six weeks thoroughly testing the new system and integrations to make sure it was configured correctly; for example, ensuring that checks were printed correctly, reports were consistent and accurate and so forth.

"We were able to ensure at a transactional level that everything was functioning exactly the same between the two environments and that it worked to the end users' expectations," says Cash.

Once the test environment was 100 percent operational, they officially migrated the databases to the new servers. The team now operates 54 separate databases—including Enterprise and all third-party applications—that connect to the single instance of SQL. This has greatly reduced the complexity of the system, while enhancing its functionality.

"We cut over to the new system on a Monday, which is when all time entries are due so we had to guarantee no downtime on Day One," explains Cash. "We had 120 attorneys enter their time and even executed a disbursement run at that end of that week with no interruptions to the flow of business."

### GREATER FLEXIBILITY & FUNCTIONALITY

Housing Enterprise locally has some significant advantages for G&E, which Cash likens to "a kid in a candy store." For example, they have direct access to data tables so they can more easily slice and dice the data to create and deliver meaningful analytical reports on a timely basis.

*"Migrating from E-Connect to in-house servers not only provides significant cost savings, but gives us the ability to quickly and effectively respond to business needs by having the application on site."*

**Nick Pournader**  
COO and CFO

*"Managing Enterprise in-house has given us the accessibility to the application and database, which didn't exist in the E-Connect environment."*

**Michelle Kuropatwa**

The team has also found that they are much more responsive when compared to the E-Connect environment because they have the ability and control to manage the system, particularly when it comes to reporting. With E-Connect, they had to contact Elite Professional Services, fill out a work order and wait for the requested report. Now the team can simply write a query and produce the report in-house. This process now takes hours, whereas it could have taken days before.

In addition, in-house system is certainly faster and that some of the tasks are more automated. The enhanced flexibility with integrations allows the firm to streamline more processes. "Managing Enterprise in-house has given us the accessibility to the application and database, which didn't exist in the E-Connect environment," says Kuropatwa.

### STRONGER POSITION FOR FUTURE GROWTH

G&E is now in a stronger position to enhance business processes, control their upgrade path and integrate new applications. In fact, Cash and his team overbuilt the virtual environment, which is currently running at 30 percent, so the firm wouldn't have to invest in additional infrastructure for at least three to five years.

Furthermore, the IT team can leverage its established methodology for any future software upgrades. The same type of testing environment ensures that new system capabilities will be fully functional before going live.

"Migrating from E-Connect to in-house servers not only provides significant cost savings, but gives us the ability to quickly and effectively respond to business needs by having the application on site," shares Pournader.

For more information on migrating from E-Connect to an in-house Enterprise system, please call (323) 642-5200 or visit [elite.com](http://elite.com).

