



Shaping Up IT at Gold's Gym



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Jeff Skeen

Chief Information Officer

Gold's Gym International

Gold's Gym International, Venice, California

When amateur and professional athletes join Gold's Gym, their concern is personal fitness, not personal information. With thin clients, Chief Information Officer Jeff Skeen ensures that the gym employees focus on their members' fitness goals and leave IT maintenance and security to corporate headquarters with confidence.

Foundation for Growth

When Skeen and his partners bought Gold's Gym International in August 1999, the organization lacked an IT infrastructure and he was able to design a "dream" system from the ground up. They plan to grow from 30 to 150 corporate gyms and from 640 to 1,000 franchise gyms. To support expansion, the IT system must be standardized and secure. "Our biggest issue was computers in the field," said Skeen. "With more than 2.5 million members worldwide, we have an extensive database of important and private information that needs to be protected. My team evaluated all the different ways to set up a gym and found that thin clients allowed us to grow rapidly and expand sites while minimizing IT support in the field."

A Better Solution: Wyse Winterm Terminals

Under Skeen's plan, each gym has several thin clients to satisfy different operational needs: retail sales, check-in and security, customer service, and sales contracts. They connect to co-located servers via a 64K Frame network where an application service provider manages upgrades, performance, and security.

With multimedia capabilities, some thin clients are connected to cameras to take identification photos. Each employee has a unique log-in for access to the same virtual desktop on any thin client. The secure desktop prevents people from bringing in games, screensavers, and other personal programs for use on the company machines.

Solution Architecture

■ Wyse Products:

- Wyse® Winterm™ thin clients
- Wyse™ Rapport® management software

■ User Applications:

- Conexion Gym Management System
- Microsoft® Office Suite, Exchange, and Internet Explorer
- SalesLogix
- Crystal Report Writer

■ Devices per Site:

- 1 retail sales
- 1 check in/security
- 1 customer service
- 2 sales contract stations.

■ Terminal Server OS

- Citrix® Metaframe XP™
- Windows® 2000

■ Network

- 64K Frame network with co-located servers at hosting facilities

Skeen recounts a story of one gym owner who called for technical support. A former employee had stolen the server and the gym owner did not have a backup tape. They had to restore nearly 5,000 member records from paper files. With thin clients, Gold's Gym has centralized control of who has access to what information and no one can walk out of a facility with the business records.

Faster, Cheaper, Better

Gold's Gym has deployed the solution to more than 30 corporate gyms and offered it on a pilot basis to some franchises. There are no onsite IT support staff at any gym, just two part-time employees to support more than 150 terminals using Wyse™ Rapport® management software to configure and upgrade remotely. Skeen estimates the organizations Total Cost of Ownership savings to be approximately 50-60 percent.

Gold's recently rolled the IT solution to 15 stores in just two days. With Gold's opening 100-plus new franchises a year, Wyse solutions offer a compelling proof point for rapid expansion support.

"The people at the gym thought we had put in new computers that were faster than their old ones," said Skeen. "We have 2000 employees, and an IT staff of four people." The pre-configured Winterm desktops are shipped to the gyms for plug-and-play setup. They connect to application servers run by a third-party company. With thin clients, Gold's Gym knows that their information is safe, the technology is reliable, and they can focus on helping clients hit their personal fitness goals.

In 2004, after completing the pilot stage for franchise rollout, Skeen will offer the IT package to the rest of the Gold's Gym franchises.

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