



**Customer:** J.W. Nutt Company  
**Web Site:** [www.jwnutt.com](http://www.jwnutt.com)  
**Customer Size:** 25 employees  
**Country or Region:** United States  
**Industry:** Agriculture  
**Partner:** ClearPointe Technology

#### Customer Profile

North Little Rock, Arkansas-based J.W. Nutt is the nation's leading cash grain and soybean meal brokerage firm.

#### Software and Services

- Microsoft® Server Product Portfolio
  - Microsoft System Center Essentials 2007

For more information about other Microsoft customer successes, please visit:  
[www.microsoft.com/casestudies](http://www.microsoft.com/casestudies)

## Brokerage Firm Deploys Updates 85 Percent Faster with New Management Tools

“Since we’ve been fully updated and running on System Center Essentials 2007, we have not experienced any downtime or non-compliance.”

Frank McKinney, Chief Financial Officer, J.W. Nutt Company

*A leading regional financial services provider, J.W. Nutt Company relies on managed services provider ClearPointe Technologies for IT management. ClearPointe recently upgraded its customer’s management tools to Microsoft® System Center Essentials 2007, for enhanced management of servers, desktops, and software. J.W. Nutt has experienced 100-percent uptime, 85-percent faster update deployments, and greater overall confidence in its IT environment.*

#### Business Needs

Based in North Little Rock, Arkansas, J.W. Nutt Company is a leading cash brokerage services provider for the United States grain trade. The company handles grain trading for some of the largest grain and soybean meal consumers in the country.

Small and nimble, the company conducts its daily business within an IT environment that includes 25 workstations running the Windows® XP operating system, 5 network printers, and 3 server computers. Two of those servers use the Windows Server® 2003 operating system to run Microsoft®

Exchange Server 2007 and Microsoft Internet Security and Acceleration (ISA) Server 2004. The other server uses the Windows 2000 Server operating system to run legacy line-of-business Web applications.

The company managed its IT systems internally until 2002, when it handed over management to ClearPointe Technology, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner specializing in managed services. “We wanted our IT environment in the hands of experts,” explains Frank McKinney, Chief Financial Officer for J.W. Nutt Company. “Our systems absolutely can’t go down because our

customers depend on us to make split-second, market-based decisions.”

ClearPointe used Microsoft Operations Manager 2005 and Windows Server Update Services (WSUS) 2.0 to remotely manage the IT environment. However, WSUS 2.0 required an administrator to create and run a custom status report every time someone wished to assess the health of the systems. “It was so labor-intensive and time-consuming to produce reports that we only performed status checks on a monthly basis, in conjunction with the regular updating cycle,” says John Joyner, Senior Network Architect for ClearPointe Technology.

In March 2007, ClearPointe upgraded the entire J.W. Nutt infrastructure—replacing all workstations, servers, and switches with new hardware—and decided that it would be a good time to make the transition to new management tools also.

## Solution

In April 2007, ClearPointe Technology upgraded both companies’ systems to Microsoft System Center Essentials 2007, which gives both ClearPointe and J.W. Nutt timely information in a convenient format. It took the partner approximately two hours to install System Center Essentials 2007, after which it immediately configured the system for service-provider mode.

Because of the new hardware at J.W. Nutt, all the computers required updates that had been released following their manufacture. Says Joyner, “As soon as we deployed System Center Essentials 2007 agents to the J.W. Nutt workstations, we received feedback that we needed to get them all up-to-date.” ClearPointe used a task in the System Center Essentials 2007 console to automatically detect and then load the new updates.

Within 24 hours of an update’s deployment, the console produces clear feedback as to which computers did not successfully complete installation of the update. For the initial deployment of the updates for the 25 new workstations, three reported problems. Within 48 hours of installing System Center Essentials, all 28 managed computers at J.W. Nutt were completely compliant.

ClearPointe is using System Center Essentials 2007 to monitor all the managed switches, servers, and workstations at J.W. Nutt. The partner also uses the network device monitoring features primarily to create network diagrams of the topology at J.W. Nutt. The diagrams will be used for future fault isolation purposes. “System Center Essentials 2007 acts as a vehicle to help us ensure that we’re providing our customers with the high levels of service that they expect,” says Joyner.

The new system also helps ClearPointe prioritize tasks and resolve issues more quickly. For example, the Health Explorer shows all problems in a single, hierarchical view so that IT administrators can see which sub-components may be affecting others in the same application or server.

## Benefits

J.W. Nutt now has an IT environment that is easier and less time-intensive to manage. “Since we’ve been fully updated and running on System Center Essentials 2007, we have not experienced any downtime or non-compliance,” says McKinney.

### ■ More streamlined management.

“Microsoft significantly improved the methods by which we can deliver managed services to J.W. Nutt,” says Joyner. “Previous management tools demanded a lot of overhead to provide

managed services for remote servers in untrusted domains. We used to have to manually deploy and maintain a lot of individual, unconnected pieces, such as virtual private network software, devices, and routers, but with System Center Essentials 2007 certificates, there’s one connection point, which greatly reduces management complexity.”

- **Increased efficiency.** ClearPointe can use System Center Essentials 2007 to identify problems as they occur and resolve them in near real time, so J.W. Nutt can enjoy heightened security. “It’s so much faster and easier to assess the customer’s IT health with these new tools that we now do it on a daily versus a monthly basis—with no additional work,” says Joyner.

In the past, installing new hardware required ClearPointe to physically restart each computer two or three times, run the update program, and download the service packs and any additional updates. “Replacing that many computers required a tremendous amount of manual labor and, best-case scenario, about 40 hours of onsite work,” says Joyner. “This time, we spent just 6 hours at the console in our offices and made 28 new, non-updated computers fully compliant within two days.”

- **Increased visibility for proactive management.** In addition to the partner’s dynamic view of real-time status and clear task prioritization, the system shows the customer daily health reports, dashboard displays, and software distribution information. “I now have a quick and understandable way to confirm that everything in our environment is working as it should,” says McKinney.