

Re: SBS user with extremely large mailbox

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- *From:* "Dave Nickason [SBS MVP]" <gw@dibble.com>
 - *Date:* Thu, 20 Apr 2006 15:23:06 -0400
-

I'm in an end user environment rather than a consultant, so my issues are slightly different. Not that much, though – just that I only have one customer, my boss.

I used to try to impose all these limits, make him adhere to best practices, complain about mailbox size, and all that. What I found was that I was constantly explaining why something can't be done. This created friction, and the impression that I was always the guy who could never do whatever it was he wanted done.

Now, when someone wants to do something that may not be the best idea, I never say no right off the bat. I say let me look into that. Then I find a way to do it, and I say, well, to do that is going to be expensive, but it can certainly be done. Often he will pull the trigger on an expense I never would have.

This has changed things a lot. Instead of being the guy who can't do a lot of things, I'm now the guy who can do just about anything given the right budget. This has not only given me a great budget situation for IT, but I'm better respected as someone who always tries to give people what they want. It's expensive, but I provide a lot of value and service for that expense.

Instead of saying the guy can't have a 12 GB mailbox (keeping in mind it's obviously not true because he does have one), I would tell him that I certainly understand why he wants that. I would give him the performance implications, and tell him he needs to budget for a higher level of hardware and support (you get paid for this, right?). Anyone can tell this guy a 12 GB mailbox is unworkable. What makes you stand above the crowd is that with some clever configuration in Outlook, you can make it work better – as well as it can be made to work. To me, the most important thing is to make the guy's IT experience great, so he'll be happy to pay the bill and recommend you to his friends.

No is almost never the right answer. I've never done construction, but I know I can build a road. You might have to buy me a construction company and hire me some experienced workers, and it might not be worth the money to do that, but yes if you really want me to build a road, I can do it.

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My personal opinion is that if you approach this from the perspective that anything can be done if you're given the right resources (read budget), you will have a better relationship and be more valued by your client, and your income will rise. All that's left at that point is for you to exceed expectations. You've got a guy who's struggling with a 12 GB mailbox. If you make him not struggle with that mailbox, his mind will be on that rather than the bill, because he lives in that mailbox all day. The focus will be on what you can do for him, rather than on how much he has to pay you. Win-win.

"Matt" <Matt@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message news:3F2DDC96-401A-4B4F-A246-2213C06CC654@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

HI

If ALL else fails b*llsh*t is the last resort to make the user 'sympathetic' to the server.

Set the limits on his mailbox size to start giving warnings then cut him off. He'll start screaming and shouting and you will 'have' to investigate the server to see whats going on. You'll find exchange is 'Struggling' but "You've managed to get it working for now" (you've increased the limit again) but you can't say how long it will be up without some remedial work and reorganisation etc etc

The net result if this that if the user NEEDS his email on the road and doesn't have it for a while he will make damn sure to listen to you after you get it working (you will be God at this stage). Also, it will be the catalyst for him to play by the rules in the future.

If nothing else it will open the door for you to have THAT conversation. Unless he knows his way around the server he will never know

Don't forget that after you have temporarily got it working you will have to take the server down at some point to do some work on exchange because of HIS mailbox size (block HIS RAS or VPN for a while when he is in THAT important meeting)

I'm sure MS needs to include psychology in it's server exams for admins

Hope this helps
Matt
"Wopster" wrote:

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Russ and Dave thank you very much for taking the time to answer my questions.

I like the idea of scheduling two different syncs to take place. You have both been very helpful.

Take Care,
LT

"Dave Nickason [SBS MVP]" wrote:

Some suggestions. I would guess that a major part of the issue is that he may be using an ANSI OST file instead of Unicode. This would account for the failure to sync, since he would be up against the 2 GB ANSI file size limit. R-click Mailbox in his Outlook Folder List -> Properties. On the General tab, Advanced, Advanced again. At the bottom it should say "Outlook is running in Unicode mode against the Microsoft Exchange Server." Otherwise, you need to switch the OST to Unicode and re-sync from scratch.

I would most definitely do this while connected to the wired LAN. You should be able to get Outlook to create a Unicode OST by shutting it down completely (including ActiveSync etc.). Find all the PST and OST files in the user profile and rename them. Open Outlook, which should recreate the OST. Without waiting for the new OST to sync, check to see that it's in Unicode mode. If not, post back and I'll figure out a group policy setting you can create to tell Outlook to prefer Unicode. After the Unicode

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OST is created and synched, you can rename any PSTs that he uses back to their original names. If there are size issues with PSTs, I would create new ones in Unicode and import the items from the old PSTs. If Outlook finds any ANSI files when it goes to create the new OST, it won't create it in Unicode and you'll be right back in the same place.

Another suggestion if you're still having issues after this: stop using cached mode. Manually configure the settings for folders to be available offline, and set the sync to happen on a schedule he prefers. This is done on Tools -> Send/Receive -> Send/Receive Settings -> Define Send/Receive Groups. Get the user to create a folder structure where he can have a significant number of folders that seldom or never change. Then create two sets of send/receive settings. One of these will sync the whole mailbox, and it'll only be used occasionally when circumstances allow. The other will sync only the folders that commonly change. That one will be the one used most often when working remotely. Please note that although this is a manually created send/receive configuration and schedule, and it's not cached mode, it still uses the OST. So you still need to make sure he's in Unicode mode.

You can fine tune the send/receive settings to only download

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headers.

Then

the messages will download when he requests them. There are a lot of options for this – search Outlook Help for "work offline" or "synchronize" and see what you come up with.

Lastly, it seems to me that folders containing smaller numbers of items sync faster/better. My boss and I both have mailboxes containing large numbers of items. His are in about 100 folders, mine in maybe 15 or so. My perception is that his performance is better than mine because even though he has many more folders, his contain more reasonable numbers of items than mine.

Your customer needs to understand that while some work and learning curve are going to go into this, it's to his benefit, and it's an attempt to make a currently unsatisfactory situation a lot better. He has to realize that there is no way to make a 12 GB mailbox perform like a 200 MB one, but if he configures everything properly, he'll be a lot happier than he is now.

"Wopster" <Wopster@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
wrote in message
news:4558E1C5-F5CE-491F-B70A-14AF56786547@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Hey all I need a little advice for a growing sbs problem of mine.

I have an sbs2k3 customer where one user has 12gb's of mail. Prior to the

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exsp2 installation, we were having to constantly monitor his mailbox and manually archive where necessary to free up space, his mailbox was taking approximately half the usable exchange space for all users in the office. After the installation exchsp2 installation we haven't had to monitor it as much. Here is where the problems occur.

The customers mailbox hasn't been able to complete a sync in a very long time therefore he's missing some of his mail. My recommendation was to let it sync for a very long time (read 4–6 hrs), his interpretation of long was 1hr. He is unhappy because his mail isn't synced and is slow. Here are some details of what I've tried to do.

#1 – This user is remote 99.99% of the time, he has outlook 2003 setup with rpc over http. This as you can imagine takes a very long time to sync. He does a lot of flying and types a lot of email while in flight when he doesn't have an internet connection. OWA is out of the question.

#2 – Because I exmerged mail from their old server and imported it into the new one, the modified date on the messages is when the import took place. So archiving is out of the question because it

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works off the modified
take
(which is now the date I installed the server).
Besides that, the
customer
has several litigations that have been going
on for years and he
needs
access
to email as far back as 98/99. What I ended
up doing was setting up a
separate profile for his secretary (inoffice)
where she could access
his
mailbox, and manually drag
folders/messages to an archive file (she
knew
what
litigations where complete), however after
moving large amounts of
his
mail
because he's remote it takes forever to sync
up.

#3 – PST files – I was thinking of popping
mail to his system so
he
wouldn't have to sync but then we'd have to
manage the 2gb file limit
and
he'd end up with 6 separate pst files.

#4 – Spam Filtering – I thought I could
reduce his mailbox by
running
the IMF filter or cloudmark against it.
However the customer didn't
receive 1
message he was expecting (and this was the
day I set it up) and he
"can't
afford not to receive those messages and
doesn't have time to look at
his
Junk Mail folder". So spam filtering has
been disabled.

Knowing the limitations of the sbs2k3
software and outlook, and
knowing

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how
important it is to try to keep the customer
happy what would some of
you
recommend as an email solution in a
situation like this?