

# Ballard Spahr implements ITSM for more efficient IT service delivery

## CUSTOMER



**BALLARD SPAHR ANDREWS & INGERSOLL, LLP**

Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP  
[www.ballardspahr.com](http://www.ballardspahr.com)

## INDUSTRY

Legal

## BUSINESS PROBLEM

When an outside consultant rated Ballard Spahr's IT Department "reactive" in managing IT service issues, the firm switched to a new strategy using ITIL methods. The question was how the firm was going to implement and manage a more proactive means of handling IT service problems amid a major system migration—without jeopardizing day-to-day operations.

## SOLUTION

Compuware  
**Vantage**™

## RESULTS

- Improved mean time to resolution
- Greater IT credibility
- Better communication between IT and the firm's vendors, end users and managing partners

## BUSINESS PROBLEM

Founded in 1886, Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP is a multi-practice, AmLaw 100 firm with an exceptional record of client service. Maintaining such good client relations requires an unbreakable synergy between the firm's lawyers and legal teams in each of the firm's respective practices—nearly 50 in all. That same type of cooperative action is equally critical in IT, according to the firm's CTO Kim Wismer. "Our law firm was founded on the idea of service excellence. What started out as a small group of lawyers has grown into one of the largest law firms in the country," she explains. "We now run 12 offices and have 550 lawyers who travel constantly, so it's absolutely critical we ensure our infrastructure supports the mobile lawyer."

Establishing mobile computing, however, entails migrating to new platforms, replacing desktops with laptops and establishing unified communications, among other things. Systems need to be configured to ensure IT service remains just as reliable on the road as it is in the office. That required capturing baseline data and monitoring end-user experience as IT moved from a standard office environment to a mobile one—a capability Ballard Spahr just didn't have.

## SOLUTION

Analysis from an outside consulting firm confirmed what Kim Wismer and Lisa Mayo, Ballard Spahr's director of IT business architecture, already knew: IT was reactive. The third-party results were just what Wismer and Mayo needed to convince the firm to fund an IT service improvement initiative—one that supplied the processes and technology to help IT mature toward a more proactive service delivery model. How would IT implement the new initiative? Wismer and Mayo chose ITIL and IT Service Management best practices—along with product solutions that encompassed both. That's where Compuware Vantage came in.

Ballard Spahr was in the middle of migrating to a new server platform for a firm-critical application when a few performance problems cropped up. The firm pointed to the vendor, while the vendor pointed to the firm. The two parties went back and forth about who should resolve the issue. Meanwhile, the problem remained—that is, until Ballard Spahr installed Vantage on the servers in question. "With Vantage, we saw right away that we didn't have our load balancing set properly," Wismer says. "It's great to have Vantage. We didn't have a way to capture holistic metrics before. Now we can baseline trends and make tweaks as we migrate systems. That's where we really see the benefit of Vantage—knowing ahead of time that our systems perform optimally."



“Someone can sit on the phone and tell you what the problem might be but that can result in a lot of wasted time. Vantage really helps to streamline the process of locating where the true problems are so you don’t waste resources and time.”

--Lisa Mayo, Director of IT Business Architecture, Ballard Spahr

And, according to Mayo, that saves a lot people a lot of effort. “Someone can sit on the phone and tell you what the problem might be but that can result in a lot of wasted time,” she explains. “Vantage really helps to streamline the process of locating where the true problems are so you don’t waste resources and time.” The firm’s service desk, for instance, uses Vantage dashboards to monitor transactions and alert the firm when service slowdowns exceed thresholds. IT teams drill down to a specific user session to see what’s causing a problem—in many cases, long before users are aware of one. In the past, however, that wasn’t always the case. Because Ballard Spahr lawyers connect to their network either from another internal office or externally through an ISP, it would take days or weeks to track down what an end user experienced. “I think our lawyers thought we were making things up when we said we didn’t see any problem, but we just didn’t have any proof as to what the suspected problem was,” Mayo says. “Vantage lets us know what’s going on, whether it’s an end user’s desktop, laptop or ISP. We’re not dealing with major surprises or issues after the fact anymore.”

## RESULTS

Just after three weeks with Vantage installed, Ballard Spahr was already seeing the benefits. “Vantage helps us communicate more effectively by providing concrete data. That’s its greatest selling point,” says Mayo. “Now when we say there’s a problem, we have the statistics to back it up.” Communications at the firm are more objective:

- Service desk and the lawyers communicate objectively, so IT can isolate performance issues more quickly.
- IT managers can assign the right teams to troubleshoot issues faster.
- IT can initiate application changes more effectively with software vendors.
- IT can better demonstrate to the firm’s managing partners the strategic value of IT.

“Vantage can give IT departments recognition,” adds Mayo. “We started with a strategic plan that outlined among other things, different ways IT can help our mobile lawyers. Vantage provides the statistics that helped us explain the big picture of what we wanted to accomplish and the benefits the firm would gain. Now we’re able to prove to our senior management the improvements we’ve made and how IT is working in a more proactive way. The fact that clients are now demanding more proactive measures should be a wake-up call to other firms.”

To learn more about Compuware Vantage, visit:  
[compuware.com/vantage](http://compuware.com/vantage)

Compuware Corporation makes IT rock around the world, helping CIOs optimize IT performance to achieve business goals. Compuware solutions accelerate the development, improve the quality and enhance the performance of critical business systems while enabling CIOs to align and govern the entire IT portfolio, increasing efficiency, cost control and employee productivity throughout the IT organization. Founded in 1973, Compuware serves the world’s leading IT organizations, including more than 90 percent of the Fortune 100 companies. Learn more about Compuware at [compuware.com](http://compuware.com).

Compuware Corporation Corporate Headquarters  
One Campus Martius  
Detroit, MI 48226-5099

© 2008 Compuware Corporation

All Compuware products and services listed within are trademarks or registered trademarks of Compuware Corporation. Java and all Java-based marks are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sun Microsystems Inc. in the United States and other countries. All other company or product names are trademarks of their respective owners.

