



# Crews & Associates, Inc.

## Investment Firm Uses ClearCube Blades to Support Industry-Vital Bloomberg Professional® Software



Crews & Associates, Inc. is a wholly owned, non-bank affiliate of First Security Bancorp that specializes in fixed income products. Financial products include municipal and corporate bonds as well as U.S. Treasury, mortgage-backed and Government Sponsored Agencies securities. The firm also offers investment services in equities, unit investment trusts, options, mutual funds and variable annuities.

### The Challenge

Crews & Associates bases its bond pricing and investments on values derived from the global financial market. Since this body of information is often quite dynamic, the investment firm utilizes sophisticated Bloomberg Professional® software to access to-the-moment financial news, analytics and multimedia reports.

Previous to deploying the ClearCube solution, the investment firm installed the Bloomberg system on traditional box PCs. This platform proved to be unreliable and caused problems for the firm's IT staff and investment bankers. "Each month, the failures continued to tax our network infrastructure," says Nordina Lalmond, Network Manager. "It was especially hard on the investment bankers because access to the Bloomberg system is vital to their operations."

Even more frustrating than the failures were the IT staff's attempts to repair them. "Any time a computer went down, we'd have to reconfigure it with the user's profile, reinstall the software, call Bloomberg to give them the new workstation code and wait for Bloomberg to call us back with the unique software code needed to complete the installation . . . it was tedious," says Lalmond. "And if the computer was acting up but not completely failed, we had to wait for the user to finish using the computer before we repaired it. We couldn't access the computer while the user was logged on."

### The Solution

To eliminate IT failures and simplify asset management, Crews & Associates turned to ClearCube. "Uptime is critical to our company, so we wanted to find a more reliable platform that would provide our investment bankers continuous access to the Bloomberg system," says Lalmond. "We decided to get rid of our box PCs and transfer the Bloomberg software to the ClearCube blades."

The ClearCube solution removes the PC from the user work area, condenses it into a Intel®-based blade form-factor, and rack-mounts it in a central data center. All that remains at the user's work area are

the peripherals (monitor, keyboard, mouse) and a small connection device called a ClearCube user port that supports cable, fiber or Ethernet connectivity. Utilizing the ClearCube management and allocation software, IT administrators can remotely manage the entire deployment from anywhere in the world.

### OVERVIEW

#### ► The Challenge

Run industry-vital Bloomberg Professional® software on a computing platform that is more reliable and easier to manage than a box PC deployment

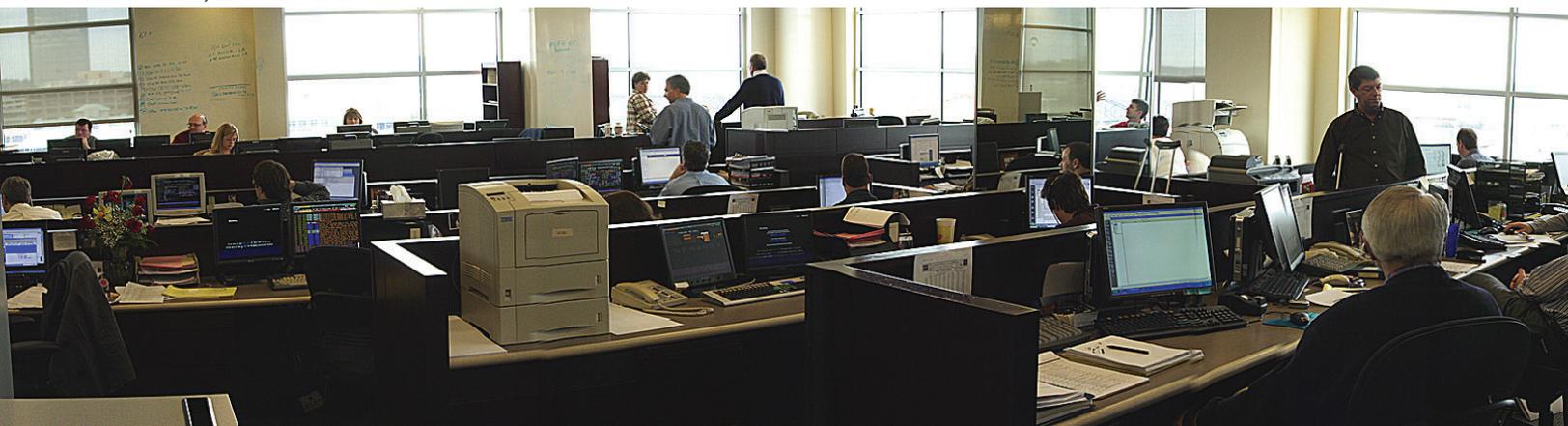
#### ► The Solution

Replace traditional box PCs with small user ports that connect computing peripherals to centralized, Intel®-based ClearCube blades via cable

#### ► The Benefit

An IT solution that gives users continuous access to the Bloomberg software and can be remotely managed from the tech center

Crews & Associates, Inc. sales floor

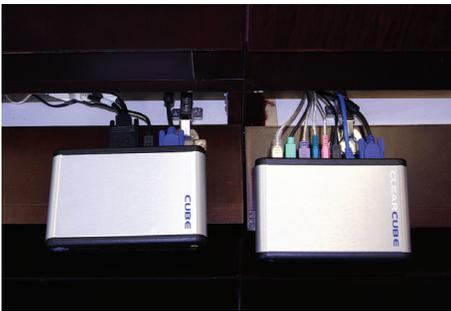


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**“Space is at a premium on the sales floor, so users like the fact that they don’t have something big on their desk anymore.”**

**— Nordina Lalmond  
Network Manager  
Crews & Associates, Inc.**

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ClearCube user ports in customized cable trough.

## The Benefit

Since deploying the ClearCube solution, Crews & Associates now experiences a significant increase in user availability. “Downtime for our Bloomberg terminals is minimal now,” says Lalmond.

Whereas previously IT staff could not work on a computer until the user was logged off, the ClearCube solution gives IT personnel 24/7 access to the blades. In the event of

a failure, an IT administrator can utilize the ClearCube management software to reallocate affected users to a spare blade in minutes. “We’ve only had one failure the entire time we’ve had the ClearCube blades, and we were able to quickly switch that user to a spare blade and resolve access issues almost immediately,” says Lalmond.

In addition to delivering 99.9% availability, the ClearCube solution enables the investment firm’s IT staff to install software, upgrade BIOS and re-image the blades without ever entering the user’s work area. Even when the administrators must physically touch every blade for memory upgrades or hard drive replacements, they can do so directly in the data center without disrupting business operations.

“The sales floor is on the 10th floor, and the tech center is on the 7th floor. Having everything centralized is very convenient and allows the IT staff to be more efficient. Whenever there’s an issue, we can take care of it right here. We don’t have to go up three floors anymore to see what’s going on,” says Lalmond.

Removing the PC from the desk has also increased real estate space on the sales floor and desktop while eliminating PC-related noise and heat. “Space is at a premium on the sales floor, so users like the fact that they don’t have something big on their desk anymore—just a couple of flat panels, a Bloomberg keyboard and a mouse. The user ports are small enough to house in a customized cable trough built

behind the desks. Now if have to work on the wiring, we can just pop open a small door behind the desk. We don’t have to displace the user anymore,” says Lalmond.

The ClearCube solution has provided Crews & Associates with the added benefit of hardened security. The firm’s users cannot attach mass storage devices such as disk drives or USB keys to their user ports. These security measures ensure that unauthorized personnel cannot download sensitive proprietary data or upload unwanted software.

The ClearCube solution has made a significant impact on Crews & Associates productivity in terms of uptime and asset manageability. The firm’s investment bankers now have uninterrupted access to vital Bloomberg Professional® applications, and its IT staff has uninterrupted access to the blades. “Our Bloomberg users are happy with the ClearCube solution. When our users are happy, the IT staff knows it’s a job well done,” says Lalmond.

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**“Our users and the IT staff are very happy with the ClearCube solution.”**

**— Nordina Lalmond  
Network Manager  
Crews & Associates, Inc.**

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