

Avison Young streamlines geographic expansion with [Dropbox for Business](#)

Avison Young is Canada's largest independently owned commercial real estate services provider. The Avison Young team handles everything from real estate transactions to financing and mortgage placement. Headquartered in Toronto, Ontario, the company has 43 offices in 35 locations throughout Canada and the United States.



A solution built for rapid expansion

Although Avison Young first opened its doors in 1978, the last several years marked the beginning of explosive growth as the company embarked on an ambitious expansion plan. Initially, each new office was furnished with a separate server for file storage and backups. But it quickly became apparent that this approach would be costly and cumbersome. "Servers are expensive, and additional software or connectivity pushes the price tag up even more," confirms Lyndal Hanna, Avison Young's VP of Information Technology. "But the greater cost is the time. When we're adding locations and onboarding new users, we need to be able to work quickly."

Aligned with the company's strategy, the IT organization has been designed to be lean, flexible, and focused on supporting business opportunities rather than hardware and infrastructure. "We don't want to spend our resources amassing multiple servers and an organization to manage them," explains Hanna. "We don't have programmers or an in-house help desk. Our IT philosophy is to outsource as much as we can so we can react quickly without compromising our service standards."

["We don't have programmers or an in-house help desk. Our IT philosophy is to outsource as much as we can — and Dropbox helps us do that."](#)

Lyndal Hanna, VP of Information Technology, Avison Young

In 2011, when the company decided to set up a group of brokers in an executive space in Boston, Hanna knew she needed to find a simple alternative to a server. "It just didn't make sense to install a server for four people in a temporary space," she says. "I was familiar with Dropbox and decided I would give it a try for that office."

Hanna went to Boston and set up the group with Dropbox for Business. It worked so well she found herself doing it again when it came time to open an office in Los Angeles.

Company: [Avison Young](#)

Requirements

- Storage that could expand with the company
- Fast and easy implementation
- The ability to keep people in sync from anywhere

Solution: [Dropbox for Business](#)

Results

- Fast setup that keeps pace with company growth
- Easy collaboration between employees in different offices
- Less reliance on IT; faster resolution of IT issues

Bridging distance and information gaps

As Avison Young has continued to establish offices in cities across the U.S., the number of employees using Dropbox for Business has grown exponentially. Once added to the Dropbox account, employees can easily collaborate, regardless of distance. "If there's a broker in Houston and another in LA and they're doing a deal together, they both have access to the latest information and can work from the same files," explains Hanna. "Dropbox makes collaboration much simpler."

Other tasks that requires collaboration between staff members, such as budget development, have also become more streamlined thanks to Dropbox for Business. Hanna explains, "Before Dropbox, it was hard to keep track of file versions. But this year, we did our entire budget process using Dropbox and everyone stayed on the same page."

During corporate acquisitions, Dropbox for Business helps keep existing Avison Young employees, newly acquired staff, and even outside business partners in sync. Hanna just sets up a designated folder to store pertinent documents, and then grants access to the new staff and others involved in the process, such as the attorneys.

IT management made easier

The adoption of Dropbox for Business has not only helped support collaboration as Avison Young continues to grow, it has also helped eliminate extra work for the IT department. "With Dropbox, people can share files themselves. They don't need to call IT for help anymore," Hanna says.

Two key reasons Hanna prefers Dropbox for Business over servers are the quick setup and ease of use. "I can have users up and running in a matter of minutes," she says. "We have about two hundred and fifty people on Dropbox, and I can probably count on one hand the times I've had to call our Dropbox rep for help. Percentage-wise,

"We don't want to spend our resources amassing multiple servers and an organization to manage them. Dropbox for Business is much more cost-effective."

Lyndal Hanna, VP of Information Technology,
Avison Young

that's pretty phenomenal."

Mobile and remote access capabilities are also particularly valuable to the Avison Young team. Hanna says, "With a server, you have to set up VPN so people can get to their files when they're away. But with Dropbox, it's easy for them to access everything."

Nearly as important as having access to files is having the ability to back them up. Hanna lists both the sync and file recovery features of Dropbox as being essential. "One of our staff members accidentally deleted 14,000 files once," she says. "Had we been on a traditional file server, we would have been scrambling for days. But with Dropbox, we recovered the files in no time. It was so nice to be able to tell the panicked users that we'd be able to get everything back."



About Dropbox

Dropbox lets you bring your docs, photos, and videos anywhere and share them easily. Keep files up-to-date across multiple devices and stay in sync with your team — effortlessly. Dropbox for Business also offers administrative tools, phone support, and as much space as you need.

To learn more about what Dropbox for Business can do for your organization, please visit www.dropbox.com/business or email us at sales@dropbox.com.