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## CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORIES

# American Samoa: Enhancing public sector collaboration with Google Workspace

During a recent partnership, Suitebriar helped American Samoa consolidate numerous governmental organizations and departments into Google Workspace. The project yielded significant time savings and efficiency gains, enabling the client to operate with more agility and better serve American Samoans.

## About the Customer

The [American Samoa Government](#) (ASG) plays a pivotal role in organizing and ensuring that critical information and services are accessible to its people anytime, anywhere, and through their preferred communication channels.

With over 1,000 employees dedicated to serving various governmental departments, the organization has an inherent need for an efficient, secure, and unified digital workspace. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, ASG came to the realization that its decentralized method of email management was counterproductive and hindered collaborative communication, especially in a world where an increasing amount of work was being conducted remotely.

In recognizing its need for better IT support, improved domain security, and an alternative to antiquated legacy Internet Message Access Protocol (IMAP) mail servers, the American Samoa government turned to Suitebriar to obtain the technological resources necessary to better serve its people.

## The Challenge

Prior to partnering with [Suitebriar](#), the American Samoa government and its various departments relied on a fragmented communication system consisting of old IMAP servers and multiple department-specific Google Workspace tenants. The disjointed infrastructure led to significant challenges in intra-departmental communication, user adoption, and security — thereby hindering effective collaboration.

The ASG had already been planning to resolve various issues. For example, it was preparing to migrate its on-premises email system into the cloud as it was becoming difficult to maintain and manage. But the pandemic — along with a rapid transition to remote work — vastly accelerated the ASG's timetable, prompting swift action.

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## Partner Role in Project

To meet these challenges, Suitebriar developed a multi-phased plan to migrate user data from the existing IMAP servers and other Google Workspace instances into a single tenant, which would be centrally managed by one IT team.

The plan consisted of the following stages:

### CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING

At Suitebriar, we understand that major organizational change can be hard on leadership, employees, and the parties an organization serves.

With that in mind, we created a full change management workstream across the three-phased project. Our team also offered 11 training courses for all users across core applications, along with three onsite training opportunities and eight remote sessions designed to get the client's team up to speed.

### TECHNICAL PREPARATIONS

On the technical side, Suitebriar performed an extensive amount of work to migrate users, implement a consolidated [Google Workspace ecosystem](#), and remove data silos.

Our efforts were as follows:

- IMAP legacy migration to Google Workspace, which involved 800 users
- Government-to-government (G2G) migration of 175 Treasury Department users
- Search and Rescue G2G migration of ten users
- Department of Commerce G2G migration of 76 users and 21 shared drives
- Legal Affairs G2G migration of 60 users
- A security audit for each migration

We also implemented a combination of both CloudM-hosted and non-hosted solutions to migrate all users, groups, shared drives, and calendar resources, as well as a Google Vault and configured retention policies to ensure that each organization could comply with relevant laws and standards.

### IN-PERSON GO-LIVE SUPPORT

Suitebriar team members traveled to American Samoa to conduct in-person training. We remained on-site to offer go-live support and ensure our clients enjoyed a seamless transition to the new Google environment.

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## The Solution

Organizational leaders identified Suitebriar as the ideal partner to assist in its change management process. Throughout the initiative, Suitebriar collaborated significantly with Andrew Berquist, the project lead from the American Samoa Department of Commerce (ASDOC).

Berquist identified the lack of a secure, centrally managed email and the absence of a collaboration platform as the organization's two key technology deficiencies. After auditing their existing tech stack, Berquist then determined that Google Workspace and Google Cloud would best fit the client's need for a unified user experience and enhanced intra-departmental communication. The government needed to move to a cloud-based email system to promote better information sharing and reduced fragmentation, and thankfully, most of American Samoa's government employees were already familiar with these resources.

Ultimately, Suitebriar played a critical role in guiding various work streams for a smooth transition to Google Workspace. This process encompassed tasks such as staff training and continuous technical support. We also identified cross-tenant user data migration as a means of tearing down data silos between departments and accelerating the flow of information between government agencies.

Berquist and his team ensured a smooth change management process and prioritized end-user training, which provided organizational members with the confidence to embrace the new system.

## The Results

For most employees of the American Samoa government, the transition to Google Workspace was quite simple. As mentioned, the majority of workers were already using personal Gmail accounts, which made for a soft learning curve. As such, Suitebriar focused much of our training protocols on the collaborative tools within Google Workspace.

The core agencies of the American Samoa government received the most benefits out of the consolidation. These entities collaborate most frequently, after all, and the unified infrastructure made sharing information and communicating across departments far easier.

But even smaller agencies that do not have dedicated IT support still benefit from having official American Samoa government email addresses, as they allow for communication with local and federal partners.

## Department of Commerce

The [American Samoa Department of Commerce](#) was one of many agencies that transitioned their existing Google Workspace subscription to the main government tenant. After migrating to the centralized instances, the ASDOC enjoyed greater transparency across departments, as all agencies are now working within a single instance of Google Workspace.

The ASDOC's IT team will also be taking over several responsibilities that were previously decentralized and handled by discrete IT teams in various departments. For instance, the ASDOC's team now handles domain monitoring, as well as the day-to-day management of email systems.

When asked about the overall impacts of the project, Berquist notes that there are now trans-departmental "streamlined security and communication tools in place." He added that while the ASDOC had to overcome some technical hurdles over the course of the project, these challenges paled in comparison to the benefits of enhanced collaboration with fellow American Samoa government agencies.

In light of these successes, many ASG agencies have followed the lead of the ASDOC and now enjoy greater access to IT support and significant cost savings. Notably, smaller agencies no longer have to run their own email systems, allowing IT personnel to focus on more critical tasks.



### Overall Benefits of Working With Suitebriar

The client described Suitebriar as "very responsive" to their requests and also praised Suitebriar for making time to address both their formal and casual requests, which was a tremendous help to the American Samoa government's internal IT teams.

Suitebriar also demonstrated its overall flexibility, which made the transition far more seamless for end users. We adapted to the unique needs and priorities of the government, resulting in a near-frictionless migration to the consolidated Google environment.

Moreover, we provided training and expertise, which accelerated the government's transition from its disjointed technology infrastructure to a unified ecosystem. Had the organization taken on the transition independently, it would have endured a protracted timetable and incurred numerous auxiliary costs.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Moving forward, Suitebriar will continue to provide remote support services to the American Samoa government, ensuring that each agency has the tools and resources necessary to serve the government's constituents. We will also help the organization realize a strong return on investment and condensed time to value with its new technology and tools.