

VERTEKS CONNECTION



MAY/JUNE 2009

More than an IT Provider

Verteks Consulting is an integral part of the team for the City of Eustis.

Public-sector organizations have the same IT needs as businesses, but typically have smaller budgets and less IT staff to meet those needs. Finding the right technology provider is crucial to the success of new implementations as well as the day-to-day maintenance and support of the IT infrastructure.

The City of Eustis, Fla., feels lucky to have Verteks Consulting as its technology partner. Verteks President Don Gulling and his team understand the city's budget and staffing constraints and work hard to deliver cost-effective solutions along with the broad array of skills needed to keep the city's IT systems humming. Verteks responds rapidly and resolves prob-



lems quickly. Just as important, Verteks takes a very personal approach that sets it apart from other technology providers.

"Don and all the people at Verteks have been a great help to us from day one," said Wayne Robinette,

IT Manager for the City of Eustis. "There are just two of us on staff here to support 14 servers, more than 200 users and a pretty far-flung network. We call on Verteks for extra help on just about every type of technology issue you can think of.

"Verteks has always been great when it comes to response time. If something happens and we need them quickly they're just a phone call away. They never fail to answer with someone who can get us prompt results. You couldn't ask for better service or support. The Verteks team is part of the crew here."

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State-of-the-Art Solutions

Almost 20,000 people call the City of Eustis home, according to official numbers from the U.S. Census Bureau. But Eustis serves as the hub for several rural communities of eastern Lake County, northwest of Orlando, bringing its actual population to more than 50,000. State-of-the-art technology helps the city provide services to its residents.

A vital link is a 3Com IP telephony system that Verteks Consulting deployed more than five years ago. The phone system replaced a legacy PBX and created a unified voice communications network encompassing all of the city's operations.


"It links all of us together — the police and fire departments, library, everything — with extension dialing, paging capabilities, everything you need. Plus, it ties into our computer network, which simplifies administration," Robinette said. "We were pretty fortunate as a smaller city to have voice over IP before many bigger cities did. And, of course, Verteks was responsible for getting us up and running with this technology."

The phone system even extends to the city's recreation center via a wireless network. The Wi-Fi solution saved the City of Eustis the cost of running fiber-optic cabling to the remote site.

Proven Expertise

Verteks Consulting also does a lot of the behind-the-scenes work that keeps the city's IT systems up and running. The Verteks team recently upgraded the city's network and servers, implementing a virtualization solution that has improved performance, increased reliability and simplified management.

"We were outgrowing our server farm," Robinette said. "We'd had a file server crash, and our Exchange server was getting near the end of its life, too. Verteks was able to get us good deals on



SOLUTION SUMMARY

- ◆ State-of-the-art IP telephony solution links all of the city's departments and locations with extension dialing, paging capabilities and more, and unifies voice and data on a single network for easier administration.
- ◆ Virtualization enables the city to consolidate applications onto two new servers, resolving capacity challenges while reducing costs.
- ◆ Disaster recovery solution provides both onsite and remote backups. The system backs up all of the city's servers every 15 minutes, and enables instant loading of a backup image in the event of a hardware failure.
- ◆ Verteks delivers turnkey services, including design, product sourcing, implementation and support, and serves as the city's backup help desk.
- ◆ As a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, with an Advanced Network Infrastructure specialization, Verteks has well-recognized industry credentials in addition to a proven track record of success.

two nice HP servers, and with virtualization we're able to run Exchange, SQL Server and our other server systems on two boxes as opposed to eight. It has given us a smaller footprint and saves on electricity and other costs."

Verteks also replaced the city's nightly tape backup system with a disaster recovery solution that provides both onsite and remote backups. The system backs up all of the city's servers every 15 minutes, and enables instant loading of a backup image in the event of a hardware failure.

Robinette says Verteks takes the lead on these projects, from design through product sourcing to implementation and support. He trusts the Verteks engineers to steer the city in the right direction in terms of technology. As a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, with an Advanced Network Infrastructure specialization, Verteks has well-recognized industry credentials in addition to a proven track record of success.

"I totally trust their ability to handle all of our IT needs. They know our environment, understand our requirements and have done an all-around good job," Robinette said.

A Broad Range of Skills

Verteks Consulting also provides the city with a broad range of skills and years of hands-on experience. That makes working with Verteks more cost-effective than hiring additional staff.

"If I wanted to go out and hire another person, it would cost more than it does to bring in Verteks," said Robinette. "Plus, we're getting the expertise of not just one person but their whole staff. That's a real win, all the way around."

"That's why we decided to use Verteks as a backup help desk. If we are busy or on something else they can take help desk calls and either create a ticket or remote in and take care of the problem if possible. It provides better service to our end-users and improves productivity and efficiency in the long run."

Public entities often struggle to keep pace with technology change and maintain their computer systems for efficiency, security and performance. The City of Eustis faces the same budget and staffing constraints as other government agencies but has found all the IT support it needs with Verteks Consulting. With extensive experience, top industry certifications and rapid response, Verteks helps the city derive maximum value from its IT investments.

News Briefs

More IT Innovation Sought

Eighty-seven percent of senior executives believe that IT is important to their organizations, but less than half feel that IT is an important contributor to innovation, according to a global survey commissioned by the IT Governance Institute (ITGI). Additionally, only about half of all organizations measure the value they are achieving from IT.

More than 250 non-IT executives in 22 countries were interviewed by PricewaterhouseCoopers Belgium to determine their views on IT's contribution to the business and how their enterprises are governing their IT. The ITGI study revealed that 59 percent do not view IT's contribution to innovation as important or very important, although a significant majority recognize IT as a major contributor in its traditional strongholds: efficiency and effectiveness. Only a third of enterprises rely on their IT department to provide information about potential business opportunities enabled by new technologies, a key benefit of innovation.

Internet Audience Surpasses 1 Billion

The number of worldwide Internet users has passed the 1 billion mark for the first time, according to online researcher comScore, Inc. The firm says the milestone was reached in December 2008.

"Surpassing one billion global users is a significant landmark in the history of the Internet," said Magid Abraham, president and CEO, comScore, Inc. "It is a monument to the increasingly unified global community in which we live and reminds us that the world truly is becoming more flat. The second billion will be online before we know it, and the third billion will arrive even faster than that, until we have a truly global network of interconnected people and ideas that transcend borders and cultural boundaries."

China represented the largest online audience in the world in December 2008 with 180 million Internet users, representing nearly 18 percent of the total worldwide Internet audience, followed by the U.S. (16.2 percent share), Japan (6.0 percent share), Germany (3.7 percent share) and the U.K. (3.6 percent share).

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Editorial Correspondence:
4941 S. 78th E. Ave.,

Tulsa, OK 74145
800.726.7667 • Fax 918.270.7134

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The Server UNLEASHED

Microsoft and HP are collaborating to help customers maximize the business benefits of virtualized environments.

An integral feature of Microsoft's Windows Server 2008 operating system is Hyper-V — a bare-metal, hypervisor-based server virtualization product — and HP has pledged strong support for the technology. In fact, HP ProLiant servers were used as the development platform for Hyper-V.

In addition to HP ProLiant, HP BladeSystem servers and StorageWorks storage broadly support Microsoft virtualization technologies.

Customers will be the big winners, as the HP-Microsoft collaboration will help you consolidate hardware, improve server utilization, increase server automation and enhance system portability — while also cutting infrastructure costs and power consumption.

**Contact your Verteks representative
today to learn more!**



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Controlling Access

Identity management helps organizations meet security and regulatory compliance requirements.

Each of us has multiple identities — personal, consumer, business. To his family a man might simply be "Sam," but to his employer Sam is a complex array of user IDs, passwords and access privileges across numerous network resources and applications. When you consider that Sam's is just one of hundreds or thousands of identities within an organization, you begin to understand the challenge of identity management.

Faced with growing numbers of end-users who require access to IT resources, many organizations devote significant time and effort to the task of adding, changing and deleting user information and permissions. In many cases, user identities must be manually updated across disparate applications and resources, leading to data entry mistakes and delays that impact end-user productivity and increase the risk of internal security breaches.

Worse, delays in terminating access privileges when an employee leaves or changes positions can trigger red flags in a compliance audit. Auditors also look for instances where password policies and access controls aren't uniformly enforced — such as when rights to access the purchasing system enables access to accounts payable.

Granting Permission

A growing number of regulations are forcing organizations to more tightly restrict information access and to document the internal processes and IT controls in place to pre-

vent unauthorized access to sensitive information. What's more, organizations affected by these regulations have to generate an audit trail that proves compliance to internal or external auditors.

These kinds of regulatory pressures are compelling investment in identity and access management (IAM) solutions. IAM systems can help relieve these problems and improve the integrity of business processes by providing a framework for managing users and their access privileges across the enterprise.

IAM tools include user provisioning, password management, strong authentication, single sign-on and other technologies, which are increasingly bundled into comprehensive platforms. They are designed to streamline the creation, maintenance and use of digital identities, integrating business processes with the supporting technology needed to effectively manage end-user attributes, credentials and entitlements.

IAM solutions help organizations assure that users — employees, customers, distributors or partners — have secure and seamless access to the applications and other resources that correspond to their profiles. Such solutions not only aid enterprise security and regulatory compliance but also make it easier to assign privileges to large groups of users and to manage those groups more easily.

Many Benefits

Effective identity management can help organizations automate user management and roll out self-service solutions, potentially saving millions of dollars per year in help desk-related costs. According to Gartner, a 10,000-person enterprise can achieve savings of about \$3.5 million in a three-year period by implementing an automated end-user identity provisioning system, primarily by cutting thousands of hours of IT and help desk time.

IAM solutions can also improve security by ensuring the confidentiality, integrity and availability of IT resources. Given that employees are responsible for more than 70 percent of unauthorized access to information systems — and more than 95 percent of intrusions that result in significant financial losses — organizations are rightfully concerned about controlling access privileges.

Growing numbers of remote and mobile users, as well as contractors, suppliers and others who need access to enterprises systems, have complicated identity management. As access needs extend beyond the trusted network, organizations must utilize federated identity solutions to control which internal resources the external identities can access.

Comprehensive Approach

The ultimate goal of secure identity management is the application of corporate policies onto enterprise systems to ensure that users have appropriate access to the right resources at the right times. But that goal can't be realized without a comprehensive, strategic approach.

Identity information across an organization must first be integrated — but with respect for authoritative sources of identity. For example, it's not realistic to force HR personnel to stop using their internal applications in favor of a centralized identity repository and its associated interfaces. Standards are slowly being adopted within the identity management space, but most implementations still require substantial application integration efforts.

Implementing a secure identity management solution can be an imposing challenge. Besides the technological and political considerations, many identity management offerings are limited-purpose, addressing only provisioning or single sign-on, instead of the greater problem. Deploying these "silos" of identity often only makes the situation worse.

On the other hand, a comprehensive approach to identity management ultimately makes the entire network infrastructure more secure and easier to manage. Whether contained internally or spreading across the extended supply chain, identity management is becoming a near necessity for organizations with ever-increasing numbers of end-users, applications and information resources. Many organizations are adopting IAM solutions because of regulatory compliance demands, but quickly realize the benefits of efficiency, security, flexibility and scalability.

The hassle-free VPN and identity management solution



WatchGuard SSL 500 and SSL 1000

WatchGuard SSL 500 and SSL 1000 are the smart choice for businesses that want a cost-effective, easy-to-use, secure remote access and identity management solution that delivers everything that's promised — right out of the box. WatchGuard SSL appliances deliver universal access to applications and network resources with no connectors, no modules, no client management issues — no extras to buy.

WatchGuard SSL gives your network users access to all the features they need to stay productive:

- Supports the widest range of applications and resources
- Offers the broadest range of mobile device and platform support in its class
- Delivers more authentication capabilities to streamline the access process for administrators and end users
- Includes powerful mid-point and endpoint security
- Enables strong administrative control for managing user and group access from one centralized location with integrated logging and reporting
- Comes complete with every option at a standard price
- Provides an in-office experience that allows users to work as productively as they do when connected to the LAN



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Smooth Talk

Voice technologies help reduce costs and improve business flexibility.

Organizations that become too cautious about technology spending can miss terrific opportunities to save money, boost performance and create competitive advantages. Voice over IP (VoIP) and the communications technologies it enables — including unified communications, videoconferencing and telepresence — present organizations with just such opportunities.

Experience from early recessions and economic slowdowns suggests that companies that continue to invest in their IT and communications capabilities are both better able to survive a downturn and can be in a stronger position to thrive when the crisis subsides — sometimes grabbing market share from their competitors in the process.

“For companies able and willing to continue their IT investments during the recession, visual communications and collaboration products and services should become a central part of their strategy for survival — and for creating a dominant position for themselves come the upturn,” said

Dominic Dodd, principal analyst for the Frost & Sullivan technology research firm.

Stretching the IT Budget

VoIP is a proven winner, cutting long-distance charges by uniting branch locations and teleworkers over WAN and VPN links, and reducing toll-free number costs by effectively routing inbound calls. Converging communications onto a single network lowers maintenance and support costs, while conferencing can help reduce travel expenses.

With VoIP, remote offices don't necessarily require their own PBXs, nor are they isolated from the central phone system. Small offices can often connect to the main office IP phone system through a high-speed data line.

All employees can be reached through four-digit extension dialing and access the same voice mail system, regardless of location.

VoIP can greatly enhance an organization's ability to respond to changing business demands. Traditional PBXs tend to be pretty inflexible — adding, changing and moving extensions is not all that easy, and extending full voice features to remote sites may well be impossible. With VoIP, an employee's extension is no longer tied to a physical phone jack. Employees simply plug their IP phone sets into the nearest data port and log in to accept calls and access phone system features.

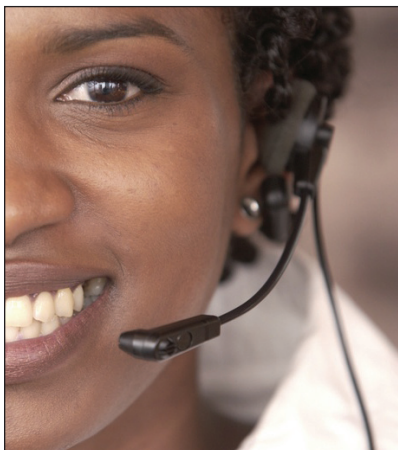
Such flexibility is a real boon to today's increasingly mobile workforce and the rise in telework. It enables remote workers to stay in touch through virtually any Internet connection. It also allows organizations to utilize “hoteling” — setting up unassigned workstations that mobile employees can use as needed — to reduce overhead.

Creating Flexibility

Videoconferencing, telepresence and unified communications all can help organizations become more flexible and resilient. These technologies can allow companies to reduce the cost of travel by replacing many face-to-face meetings with effective alternatives. Organizations also can avoid the costs, carbon emissions and general wear and tear to their employees that accompany long-haul flights.

Furthermore, telepresence and videoconferencing, as key elements of real-time collaboration, can aid organizations in making faster business decisions, increasing their agility and responsiveness to customer demand while helping them to realize business goals more quickly.

Unified communications platforms that combine phone, fax, e-mail, instant messaging, teleconferencing, videoconferencing and Web conferencing over a common IP network, offer



many benefits that positively affect the organizational bottom line. In a recent survey of 766 IT professionals conducted by CDW Corp., 61 percent of respondents identified increased productivity and 56 percent identified operating cost reductions as the most important benefits. Other benefits cited included more reliable communication (48 percent), improved cross-functional communication (44 percent), and more effective use of remote or mobile workers (41 percent).

“Unified communications promises so many benefits that many organizations are eager to find a solution as quickly as possible,” said Ken Grimsley, vice president of strategic sales at CDW. “As the results of the CDW tracking poll illustrate, the attractions and payoffs are very real, provided the implementation is well planned and compatible with the network environment.”

For many organizations, 2009 is a pivotal year for mak-

ing decisions about their communications capabilities. In 1999, there was a significant increase in PBX replacements due to Y2K concerns. Those PBXs are now nearing the end of their useful lives, and companies are being forced to consider their options. While it is true that organizations that haven't already invested in VoIP may face significant upfront costs in hardware and training, these costs frequently are paid for in first-year ROI.

It's natural to take a hard look at IT spending during a recession. However, it isn't the time to stop spending — merely the time to reassess where and how the money is being spent. Technologies such as VoIP, unified communications, videoconferencing and telepresence deserve special attention because in addition to cutting costs, they can create business efficiencies that drive new levels of productivity, collaboration and responsiveness. That's a bargain in any economy.

Telepresence Solutions Cut Travel, Improve Collaboration

Telepresence — a kind of video conference providing the sensation that all participants are actually in the same room — is set for explosive growth. The whole market, which includes telepresence equipment, network services and managed services, is forecast to grow from a 2007 level of not quite \$126 million to nearly \$2.5 billion in 2013, according to ABI Research.

“People thought Jimmy Stewart was crazy when he talked to his imaginary six-foot rabbit friend, Harvey. Now hundreds of senior executives are talking to virtual friends around the globe and no one is laughing anymore,” said ABI Research vice president Stan Schatt. “The telepresence illusion is so real that many execs forget the person they're talking to is not really in the same room.”

Such realism is accomplished via high-definition, life-size video, tightly lip-synched directional audio, coordinated décor, and special technologies enabling eye-contact between participants. And it typically requires only a single mouse-click to start a session.

Mobility is a key driver in the adoption of videoconferencing. As workgroups become geographically dispersed, video can help increase productivity by improving real-time collaboration. Videoconferencing is proven to cut travel costs and associated downtime, improve decision making, increase productivity, enhance customer service and reduce time to market of new products and services.

This benefit is more pronounced when it comes to managing geographically dispersed project teams. Ad hoc, face-to-face meetings speed the product development process, increasing revenue while reducing development costs. In many industries, shorter time to market can have a dramatic impact on market share and profit potential.

Gartner analysts say high-definition (HD)-based video meeting services will replace 2.1 million airline seats annually over the next three years. Gartner put a \$3.5 billion price tag on those seats.

“The challenge of the current economic conditions demands that every organization revisit the need for face-

to-face meetings,” said Gartner analyst Steve Prentice. “Telepresence is not the answer in every circumstance and there will always be strong cultural and other reasons for face-to-face encounters, particularly in Asia. But not every meeting needs to be face-to-face.

“There is no doubt that telepresence and other approaches to virtual collaboration — such as Immersive Workspace, which is built on top of Second Life, or yet-to-be-released solutions — will provide a real alternative for many businesses. Companies should put aside previous prejudices and bad memories of older videoconferencing services and seriously investigate these new technologies.”

Telepresence does not have to be a costly enterprise solution, either. Many telepresence operations are handled as managed services. And less expensive “executive” systems designed for one or two people mean that telepresence technology is now migrating down to middle managers, expanding the market.



PICTURE THIS

The new, video-enabled ShoreWare Professional Call Manager is at the center of what's new in ShoreTel 8.1. The Professional Call Manager opens the door to advanced collaborative applications with industry-leading high resolution video — ideal for bringing together geographically dispersed experts for mission critical activities, such as state-of-the-art telemedicine and design manufacturing.

In addition, ShoreTel has integrated its Converged Conferencing 7.1 solution with the ShoreTel 8.1 Call Manager. The combination dramatically improves day-to-day communications by letting users quickly host meet-me audio and web conferences, chat securely via IM, and instantly share documents — all with a single mouse click from the same interface they use for voice communications.



Contact VERTEKS CONSULTING today to learn more about how ShoreTel's Pure IP Unified Communications solutions can transform your business



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