

VERTEKS CONNECTION



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011

Formula for Success

Verteks delivers the right equipment and expertise to help Lake Medical Imaging take advantage of IP communications.



In the field of medical imaging, state-of-the-art technology combines with experience and expertise to ensure safe and accurate diagnosis and treatment. Lake Medical Imaging and Vascular Institute has been leading the way in non-hospital outpatient imaging since 1985, and in hospital-based radiology since 1965. Its radiologists are board certified and subspecialty trained, and its technologists are certified and experienced. These experts utilize the latest systems to provide patients with the highest standards of professional care, and their referring physicians with the most complete, expert diagnostic consultations.

Now Lake Medical Imaging has another high-tech tool at its disposal — a new ShoreTel IP communications system. The organization called upon Verteks Consulting to implement the ShoreTel solution to provide advanced voice communications for roughly 200 employees in three clinical sites, an administrative site and a call center.

Verteks proved that the right combination of technology and expertise is also critical to the success of an

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Formula for Success

IP communications implementation. Verteks engineers have the certifications and experience needed to help Lake Medical Imaging ensure a smooth transition from its legacy phone system and maximize the value of the ShoreTel solution.

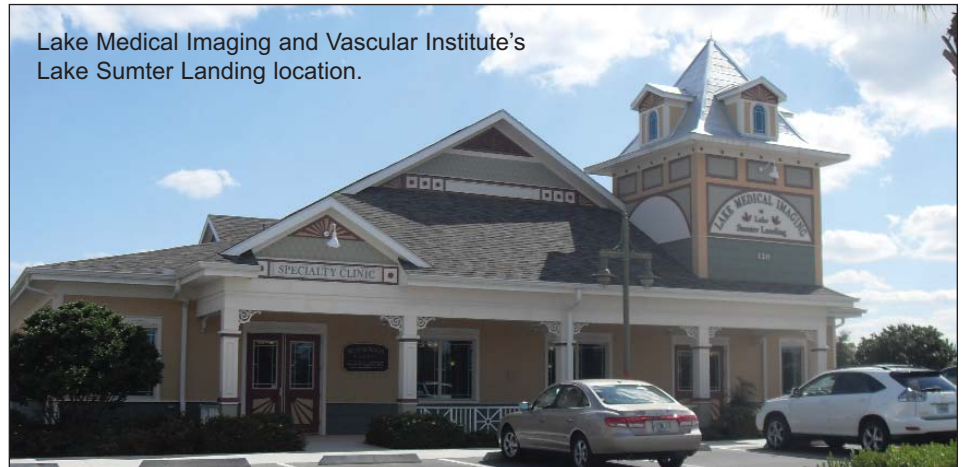
“It was one of the smoothest projects I’ve been involved with in a very long time,” said Mike Robbins, IT Director, Lake Medical Imaging and Vascular Institute. “Very little stood in our way. We were very pleased with the way the Verteks team implemented the ShoreTel system — and their customer service was just outstanding.”

Top Quality, Low Cost

Lake Medical Imaging had been relying upon an older TeleVantage Viewpoint phone system prior to implementing the ShoreTel system. The clinical sites shared one system that created a single point of failure for those three facilities. The administrative site had a separate system that required users to dial out to reach one of the clinical sites.

“The TeleVantage Viewpoint system was pretty much at the end of its life and we decided we’d get out of the Stone Age and into voice over IP. It has done wonders for us,” said Robbins. “Now we have a fully integrated system with four-digit extension dialing across all of our locations. Calls from the administrative site go through the IP network rather than the public phone network.”

The first step in the transition to voice over IP was to select an IP communications system. Lake Medical Imaging looked at Cisco and ShoreTel and ultimately chose the ShoreTel system for its ease of use, reliability and cost.



Lake Medical Imaging and Vascular Institute's Lake Sumter Landing location.

“The number one consideration was cost-effectiveness and return on investment. Cisco wanted us to rip out our current switching infrastructure to put in Cisco equipment. We had just bought HP ProCurve infrastructure for switching and routing, so that wasn’t going to happen,” Robbins said. “The Cisco system is also a bear to manage.

“ShoreTel is a good system. It’s reliable and easy for me and my staff to administer — a lot easier than our old TeleVantage system. I like the way the workgroup agents function and the fact that the security on the reporting is pretty granular. I can give people access to what they need without just opening the door.”

The Right Features

ShoreTel’s built-in contact center features were also important. The organization has a scheduling center with 16 agents, plus three supervisors who appreciate the data generated by the system’s reporting function. The ShoreTel system makes it easy for Robbins and his staff to provide that information.

“We have about 20 radiologists who read for us,” he said. “We read our own images as well as images from facilities that doctors send to us through the PACS (Picture Archiving

Communications System). We are very busy, so it is important to have these tools.”

Redundancy and failover were also critical pieces of the puzzle. Verteks helped Robbins and his team design the system to ensure that Lake Medical Imaging never loses voice communications.

“We sat down with the Verteks engineers and determined where the various pieces needed to be to make this a redundant system,” said Robbins. “That way, if a switch goes down in one facility it will roll over to the other. Verteks Consulting’s expertise was very helpful in that regard.”

Verteks configured and implemented the ShoreTel system, and provided training for the IT team as well as end-users. The ShoreTel implementation went so well that Lake Medical Imaging also implemented a MultiTech FaxFinder right after the ShoreTel project was complete. Verteks proved, once again, that the leading-edge technology and expertise provide the formula for success.

“We have four people in IT and two in PACs, and our job is to provide the tools to help everyone in the organization succeed,” Robbins said. “Verteks and ShoreTel were a big step in the right direction for us.”

Verteks Opens Pensacola Office

Verteks Consulting has announced the opening of a new regional office in Pensacola. Verteks, headquartered in Ocala, cited the need to offer expanded sales and technical support to its growing customer base in the Florida panhandle.

“We were recently selected to provide a ShoreTel communication system for the City of Pensacola, covering more than 30 departments and almost 700 users. Since that time, we’ve been approached by other clients in the area looking for advice and assistance with their needs,” said Verteks CEO Don Gulling. “With this new location, we can be a more effective and responsive technology partner for customers in western Florida.”

Verteks’ Pensacola office is located on the third floor of the City Hall building, 222 West Main Street. Office manager Jay Smith, who has more than 15 years of experience in all aspects of telecommunications and networking, relocated from St. Louis to open the Pensacola office.

“Pensacola and the Florida panhandle have turned the corner after a few major economic calamities,” said Smith. “We’re very excited to now have a physical office in this area to help clients expand their businesses and improve efficiency through leading IT and VoIP solutions from ShoreTel and our other technology partners.”

Verteks is a premier partner with ShoreTel, one of the global leaders in Unified Communications platforms that integrate voice, video, data and mobile communications over Internet-based networks. Verteks is one of the fastest-growing ShoreTel partners in the U.S., with 321 percent growth in the past 12 months. Verteks’ overall business has grown 110 percent over the past year.

“Verteks is committed to helping our customers grow their businesses by offering comprehensive communications solutions that eliminate complexity and help reduce costs,” said Gulling. “ShoreTel shares this vision with a platform that is easier to deploy to deploy, easier to administer, easier to upgrade, and easier to learn than any other Unified Communications architecture on the market.”

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SMBs in the Cloud

Global study shows that small to midsize businesses will be using more cloud services over the next three years.

In many ways, cloud computing seems ideally suited to small to midsize businesses (SMBs). Smaller organizations often lack the in-house resources to maintain a complex IT infrastructure, and hesitate to tie up capital in fixed overhead. SMBs in a growth dynamic need the ability to scale IT capacity on demand to meet changing needs, and introduce new service rapidly to take advantage of new opportunities. Cloud computing fills the bill on all counts.

It's hardly surprising, then, that SMBs plan to increase their spending on cloud computing services, including Software as a Service (SaaS) and Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) offerings.

Microsoft's global "SMB Cloud Adoption Study 2011" investigated how cloud computing will impact SMBs in the next three years. The research found that 39 percent of SMBs expect to be paying for one or more cloud services in that time period, an increase of 34 percent. It also finds that the number of cloud services SMBs pay for will nearly double.

Those SMBs paying for cloud services will be using 3.3 services, up from fewer than two services today. The larger the business, the more likely it is to pay for cloud services. For example, 56 percent of companies with 51 to 250 employees will pay for an average of 3.7 services within three years.

Gradual Move to the Cloud

SMBs are not flocking to the major cloud providers such as Amazon, Apple or Google, however. The survey found that past experience with support from a service provider is a key driver of service provider selection among SMBs. Eighty-two percent of SMBs say buying cloud services from a provider with local presence is critical or important.

Furthermore, SMBs are taking a measured approach to cloud adoption, and seeking ways to minimize monthly service fees. Within three years, 43 percent of workloads will become paid cloud services, but 28 percent will remain on-premises and 29 percent will be free or bundled with other services.

“Cloud adoption will be gradual, and SMBs will continue to operate in a hybrid model with an increasing blend between off-premises and traditional on-premises infrastructure, for the foreseeable future,” said Marco Limena, vice president, Business Channels, Worldwide Communications Sector at Microsoft. “As cloud computing becomes more ubiquitous and SMBs’ existing IT becomes outdated, adoption will grow rapidly. Hosting service providers should consider the appropriate sales, delivery and support models to target larger SMB customers that are more likely to pay for cloud services.”

Cloud Supports Growth, Profitability

The 2011 study indicates that cloud service adoption is not limited to SMBs that see themselves as fast growers. The study showed little difference in adoption rates between SMBs that expect to grow in the next three years (42 percent) and those solely focused on profitability (40 percent).

Growth companies want a scalable environment that can meet their expanding needs, with an affordable, pay-as-you-go pricing model that eliminates the need for over-investment in IT. SMBs that want to maintain their size, but want to become more profitable, seek cost-effective, efficient solutions that match their needs for predictability and low overhead cost. Cloud services can serve both sets of criteria.

The study also found that SMBs that are adopting both SaaS and IaaS services are larger, more growth-oriented and more interested in additional services, such as unified communications and remote desktop support. This provides an opportunity for hosting service providers to offer both SaaS and IaaS in order to acquire and retain high-value customers and maximize revenue per customer.

Are You Cloud-Ready?

Cloud computing promises to dramatically increase the speed with which applications are designed, built and delivered. To reap all these benefits, however, organizations must do their homework and make good decisions up front. An excellent starting point is a cloud readiness assessment.

A readiness assessment can help organizations determine what applications can most effectively be shifted to a cloud platform. Despite the overwhelming industry hype, the cloud isn’t always the most suitable choice for certain applications, particularly those with heavy computing power, network bandwidth and online transaction processing (OLTP) requirements.

Only by aligning the architecture — compute, network, data center, power and storage resources — with applications can an organization be on the path to achieve the reliability and performance it requires within a cloud environment.

Here are five considerations for companies looking at cloud computing architectures.

AVAILABILITY. Organizations need to tier their applications, identifying which applications need to be highly available, which can accept downtime and how much downtime is acceptable. They need to understand the business risk associated with a lack of availability of their data. For those applications that need to be highly available, businesses should consider enterprise-class technologies that have been rigorously tested versus looking at building something internally. It’s also important to look at multi-site solutions and disaster recovery/business continuity planning. For most businesses,

this means working with a service provider or consultant because they usually have access to greater levels of expertise and provide these services as their core business.

SECURITY. Security is still the primary concern for businesses regarding the cloud. Organizations need to know how a shared, multi-tenant environment is segmented to prevent customer overlap. How is the solution architected? Is the service provider’s cloud infrastructure — network, virtualization and storage platforms — secure?

MANAGEABILITY. Businesses need to determine what they are accountable for versus what they expect from a service provider. Most public cloud vendors do not provide administrative support. Organizations need to have the technical expertise in-house to design the right solution or seek the services of an outside provider. They should define what level of management their applications require and have an identified change management process.

PERFORMANCE. As with a more traditional hosting model, it’s important to understand workload demands on the infrastructure and what the potential bottlenecks are. Organizations should perform their own testing to evaluate how a cloud environment affects compute, storage and network resources.

COMPLIANCE. Organizations need to determine where their data will reside as well as who will interact with it and how. They need to understand which areas of compliance the service provider controls and how to audit against the standards and regulations to which they need to adhere.

Can Your Business Survive?



Disaster recovery planning is essential to the health of any business.

Natural disasters, theft, cyberattacks, equipment failure and human error can strike at any time and without warning. When critical operational information is lost, organizations can expend valuable time and resources in an attempt to recover that information. In today's business environment, however, few businesses can survive days or weeks of downtime as they attempt to recover systems and data. That's one reason why 25 percent of businesses fail to reopen following a disaster, according to the Institute for Business and Home Safety.

Yet many small to midsize business (SMBs) do not understand the importance of disaster preparedness, according to Symantec's 2011 SMB Disaster Preparedness Survey. The survey, conducted in October and November 2010 by Applied Research, included more than 1,840 IT professionals responsible for computers, networks and technology resources at SMBs in 23 countries.

Half of the respondents said their organizations do not have a disaster plan in place. Forty-one percent said that it never occurred to them to put together a plan, and 40 percent stated that disaster preparedness is not a priority for them. The information that drives most SMBs is simply not protected.

"According to the research findings, SMBs still haven't recognized the tremendous impact a disaster can have on

their businesses. Despite warnings, it seems like many still think it can't happen to them," said Bernard Laroche, senior director, SMB product marketing, Symantec. "Disasters happen and SMBs cannot afford to risk losing their information or — more importantly — their customers' critical information. Simple planning can enable SMBs to protect their information in the event of a disaster, which in turn will help them build trust with their customers."

Ignoring Warnings — Until Too Late

This lack of preparation is surprising given how many SMBs are at risk. Sixty-five percent of survey respondents live in regions susceptible to natural disasters. In the past 12 months, the typical SMB experienced six computer outages, with the leading causes being cyberattacks, power outages and natural disasters. The median cost of downtime for an SMB is \$12,500 per day.

Outages cause customers to leave — 54 percent of SMB customer respondents reported they have switched SMB vendors due to unreliable computing systems, a 12 percent increase over last year's survey. Forty-four percent of SMB customers surveyed stated that their SMB vendors have temporarily shut down due to a disaster. This affects their own businesses — when SMBs experience downtime, it costs their customers an average of \$10,000 per day. In addition to

direct financial costs, 29 percent of the customers surveyed lost “some” or “a lot” of important data as a result of disasters impacting their SMB vendors.

Government regulations such as HIPAA and Sarbanes-Oxley are also now mandating offsite backups and disaster recovery plans. Organizations that do not properly comply could face stiff penalties.

Despite all of these risk factors, SMBs are not being proactive when it comes to disaster recovery planning. Half of the SMBs that have implemented disaster preparedness plans did so after experiencing an outage and/or data loss. Fifty-two percent put together their plans within the last six months. However, only 28 percent have actually tested their recovery plans, which is a critical component of actually being prepared for a potential disaster.

Getting Started Today

Even the most basic protections are lacking in many SMBs. Less than half of SMBs back up their data at least weekly and only 23 percent back up daily. Respondents also reported that a disaster would cause information loss. In fact, 44 percent of SMBs said they would lose at least 40 percent of their data in the event of a disaster.

These organizations are taking an unneeded risk. Thanks to disk-based solutions, backup and recovery processes are simpler and faster than ever before. Some of the latest backup devices can also function as virtual servers should an organization’s primary server fail. Furthermore, virtualization and cloud-based solutions make it cost-effective to replicate backup data offsite without a large capital outlay for redundant equipment.

However, SMBs should not confuse data backup with disaster recovery planning. An effective disaster recovery plan should address not only backup and recovery procedures but offsite data storage and electronic and physical network access. It involves critical decisions that balance the cost of disaster recovery with the risk to the business.

A critical initial step is to list business functions, ranked in priority according to which must be back in operation first. Once these priorities are established, recovery time objectives (the allowable amount of downtime before the function is brought back online) and recovery point objectives (the allowable amount of data loss since the last backup) should be established for each function. Not everything needs protection — the key is to focus on core applications and data.

This winter’s “Snowmageddon” remains fresh in our minds. Japan’s devastating earthquake and tsunami are still in the headlines. Hurricane season is upon us. It’s time for SMBs to recognize that the next disaster could strike at any time, and only those with an effective disaster recovery plan will survive.



Think this is the only disaster recovery plan you can afford?

Think again

Small business owners know the importance of their business data. Downtime — which costs small businesses an average of more than \$12,000 a day — can threaten your survival.

Don’t let a disaster put you out of business.

Verteks delivers powerful and cost-effective Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning that combines planning, prevention and protection to make sure your business thrives no matter what comes your way.

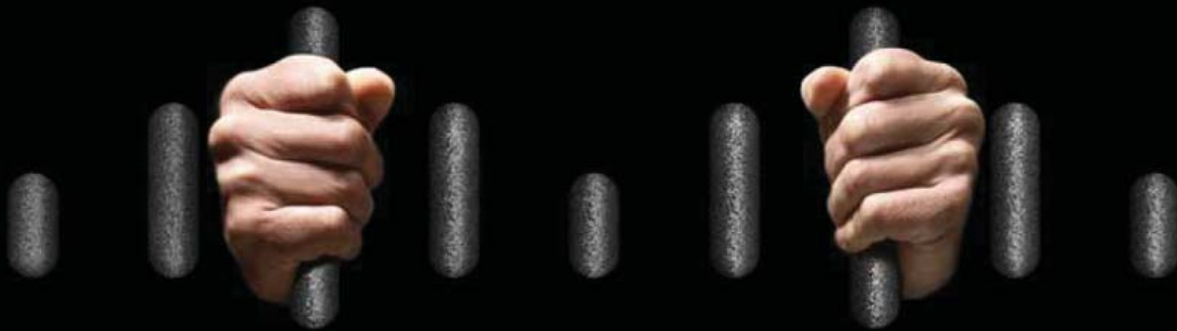
Let us help you protect your company against the disasters that can literally put you out of business. [Contact Verteks for an in-depth analysis of your disaster preparedness.](#)



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When did complexity become the norm?

(The day IP telephony vendors saw how it locked you in.)



Break out with ShoreTel's brilliantly simple business communications.

If your IP phone system is only IP-enabled or just bolted-together, it can't help but be complex. And complexity breeds expensive training, service, support, and forklift upgrades that some vendors will use to lock you in.

ShoreTel's all-in-one solution is different. Designed from the ground up expressly for IP, it was never complex – and never will be. With simplicity built in, it's easy to set up, painless to manage, and straightforward for everyone in your organization to use.

And that simplicity extends all the way to the bottom line: ShoreTel has the industry's lowest total cost of ownership. Lower than Avaya. Lower than Cisco. Guaranteed. No wonder businesses have rated it the best VoIP provider seven years in a row.*

It's that simple. It's that brilliant. It's ShoreTel.

*Nemertes Research PilotHouse Awards.



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