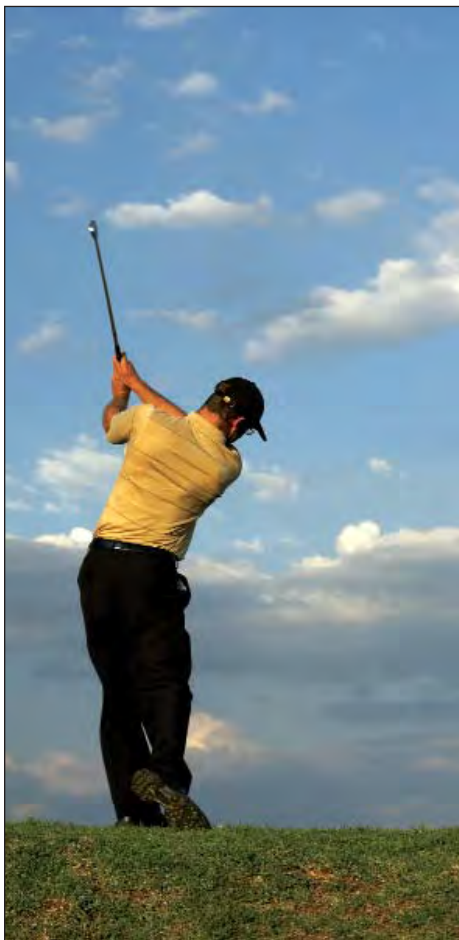


VERTEKS CONNECTION



VOLUME 9 NUMBER 4



In Full Swing

Verteks helps Edwin Watts Golf rapidly replace a failed legacy phone system and improve its ability to recover from disaster.

Edwin Watts Golf is one of the world's premier specialty golf retailers, offering a fresh assortment of brand-name golf equipment, apparel and accessories through its 90+ domestic retail stores, e-commerce site and catalog sales. Effective communication is critical to its operations, as is the availability of its IT systems and data — that's why the company relies upon Verteks Consulting.

IT Director Jason Smith first encountered Verteks as he began to evaluate options for replacing the company's legacy phone system. The 25-

year-old PBX not only lacked many of the features of a more modern system but could fail at any time. Smith decided to attend a seminar Verteks held in Fort Walton Beach, Fla., where Edwin Watts Golf is headquartered.

"Jay Smith, Verteks' regional sales rep for the Pensacola area, invited me to a demonstration of the ShoreTel phone system that he was holding here locally," he said. "We didn't intend to upgrade our phone system at that moment because we were just starting an ERP project, which was a major undertaking. But I thought it would be good to see what new technology was out there, and I was quite impressed with ShoreTel and with Jay as well.

"As we started to wrap up the ERP implementation and began looking at a new phone system, Jay was the first one I called. We did go through the process of reviewing other technologies and companies, but I really liked Verteks and the ShoreTel system. The ShoreTel technology was far superior

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In Full Swing

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to others we looked at, and Jay got a good price for us. It was an excellent deal.”

Then, as luck would have it, the old phone system suddenly quit working.

“We had planned to make a decision on a new phone system by August 1, but toward the end of June our phone system died on us,” Smith said. “That was an unfortunate situation considering we are a call center here and rely heavily on the phone system.

“So I told Jay, ‘If we do go with ShoreTel, I need to know that we can get this in quick because we don’t have a lot of time.’ He expedited the implementation for us and got us back up and running quickly.”

Stroke of Luck

When the old PBX failed, Smith and his team quickly installed a small phone system for the Edwin Watts Golf call center, but the rest of the headquarters facility was without phones. Because of their extensive experience with the ShoreTel technology, the Verteks team was able to quickly design and implement the new phone system to keep downtime to a minimum.

“The Verteks engineers did a great job planning the project once everything was designed and the equipment was ordered,” Smith said. “The implementation was very successful and we had a smooth transition from the old system to the new.”

The ShoreTel platform is known for its reliability, relieving any concerns about future phone system downtime. It also brings a number of other benefits to Edwin Watts Golf.

“The ShoreTel system has brought a whole new range of reporting that we can do that is very relevant to the call center,” said Smith. “And the voice over IP platform itself is much easier to manage from my standpoint. The old system was cumbersome and time-consuming — if we had a new hire or if someone moved offices we had to physically moving phone lines on the old phone block. Now it’s all done on the interface of the server, and the phones are just plug-and-play.”

Edwin Watts Golf is also looking to take advantage of some of the multichannel capabilities of the ShoreTel Enterprise Contact Center solution. The intuitive, unified interface can integrate seamlessly with CRM applications such as Salesforce and Microsoft Dynamics, and enable agents to communicate both externally and internally via voice, chat, email, instant messaging and video.

“We have the chat capability set up in a test bed, and when we get it working like we want we’ll migrate our existing chat software over to the ShoreTel system,” Smith said.

Rapid Recovery

Once the new phone system was in place, Verteks began to discuss other technology solutions with Edwin Watts Golf. In particular, the Verteks team wanted to ensure that the company had a strong disaster recovery (DR) plan.

“We were about to sign a new contract with a DR facility when Jay told me that he had a brand new technology that was very interesting,” said Smith. “He came over and demonstrated the Quorum product and I was very intrigued.”

Quorum onQ is a cost-effective DR solution that combines an onsite high-availability appliance with remote-site data replication. Up-to-date, ready-to-run virtual machine clones of critical systems are maintained right on the appliance, which can transparently take over for failed systems within minutes.

“Our new ERP solution had made our disk-to-disk backup more cumbersome because of the number of servers that were virtualized and the type of data we were dealing with. And if a server failed — well, all the data backed up but I didn’t have anywhere to put it until the server could be repaired or replaced,” Smith said. “The Quorum device is fantastic. If I lose a single server, I can fire up the Quorum, bring up a recovery node, and have that server in production within 10 or 15 minutes. And if a file gets deleted it can be restored in five minutes.”

Edwin Watts Golf also replicates virtual machine images and data from the local Quorum appliance to the Quorum cloud. In the event of a site disaster, recovery can be initiated with a single click, and users will be reconnected to their applications and data within minutes.

“Before, it would take a day or two to get the DR site up and running in the event of disaster,” said Smith. “With the Quorum solution, Verteks was able to save us money and provide a better solution.”

Thanks to Verteks, Edwin Watts Golf now has a more modern and reliable communication platform and the assurance that applications and data can be recovered quickly in the event of disaster. The golf retailer has the tools it needs to serve customers, and a strong partnership with a technology partner who helps keep its operations in full swing.

News Briefs

Changing Security Demands

Organizations are struggling to keep pace with the changing face of security, according to the 2013 RSA Security Trends Survey by F5 Networks. Nearly half of respondents admit that traditional safeguards are less than adequate in protecting against threats related to these trends, with roughly one-third of respondents reporting that their security readiness is inadequate.

When asked what security trends have the greatest impact on an organization's ability to achieve the level of security it desires, 73 percent of respondents named virtualization and 72 percent cited the increasing complexity of threats such as Distributed Denial of Service attacks. BYOD was named by 66 percent.

Flash Storage Accelerates Apps

The rising tide of digital data and the torrent of applications to the cloud, virtualization, and big data and analytics have enterprises struggling to find the necessary performance with their traditional hard disk drive (HDD) infrastructure. According to new research from International Data Corporation (IDC), the use of solid state storage (SSS) in conjunction with solid state drives (SSDs) will play an important role in transforming performance as well as use cases for enterprise application data. IDC's first-ever all-SSS array market forecast predicts \$1.2 billion in revenues by 2015.

In an effort to optimize storage solutions for performance, organizations are placing their most frequently accessed application data, or hot data, on high-performing solid state storage and less frequently accessed data, or cooler data, on the most capacity-efficient HDDs. Organizations leveraging the right balance of solid state storage are able to reduce the average physical footprint while delivering more transactions over a similarly configured environment with traditional storage media.

Verteks Connection

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Changing the BYOD Conversation

Mobile application management, enterprise app stores and the personal cloud facilitate BYOD by focusing on the app rather than the device.

The Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) phenomenon has spawned an array of new product categories that promise to help IT cope with the onslaught of user-owned devices. Mobile device management (MDM) is probably the best known. As the name implies, MDM tools focus on provisioning, supporting, securing and controlling the mobile devices themselves.

That seems logical at first blush. IT must ensure that the endpoints accessing the corporate network don't compromise security or put sensitive information at risk. Arguably, however, MDM is solving the wrong problem and creating new challenges for IT in the process.

Organizations are allowing, even encouraging, BYOD because it has the potential for tremendous cost savings. IT can get out of the business of supplying desktops and laptops and at the same time give end-users the freedom and flexibility to use their preferred devices. But the capital investment in desktops is only a small part of the full lifecycle cost — ongoing manage-

ment and support make up the lion's share. If IT has to take on the burden of managing user-owned devices, it has won the battle only to lose the war.

And in many respects, MDM is contrary to the spirit of BYOD. Instead of giving end-users freedom, it says, "We're going to lock down your personal device and control what you can do with it." That's not the right direction.

As more organizations embrace the BYOD concept, another technology is coming to the forefront. Mobile application management (MAM) shifts the focus from managing devices to securing the applications the devices access.

The App Matters

Gartner defines MDM as software that provides "software distribution, policy management, inventory management, security management and service management for smartphones and media tablets." The research firm equates MDM to PC lifecycle manage-

ment tools but with features specific to mobile platforms.

MAM provides a somewhat different set of functions, including enterprise application delivery, security, configuration, licensing and maintenance, along with usage tracking, reporting and policy enforcement. It enables IT to control which applications are provisioned to which devices, based upon device type, user, role and other policies.

There is some overlap in functionality but the viewpoint is different. Instead of deciding which devices can access which corporate resources, IT is deciding which applications can be pushed out or downloaded to each device and securing those applications.

MAM also reflects the shift in how enterprise applications are provisioned and used. Traditionally, IT supplied and managed both the endpoint device and a set of enterprise applications the employee was allowed to use. The user experience was limited to those devices and apps. Today, end-users bring not only their own devices but their own apps, including apps downloaded from public app stores. Because IT does not have complete control over the device or app, a new application management strategy is needed.

Locking down the entire device does not address the security concerns associated with third-party apps. Changing usage patterns warrant a more granular approach to security in which authentication, encryption and remote wipe take place selectively, at the application level. So-called “app wrapping” forces third-party apps to use multifactor authentication or a VPN, and “geofencing” limits app usage based upon the user’s location or the time of day. IT should enforce passcode policy compliance across all app types and maintain control over organizational data. MAM enables IT to do all that instead of tinkering with the user’s device.

Shifting Focus from the Device

The change in application usage patterns reflects a trend toward more mobile-enabled applications. Gartner predicts more than 73 billion mobile applications will be downloaded worldwide in 2013. By 2014, many organizations will deliver those applications to employees through enterprise app stores. MAM is an overarching technology that enables IT to manage and secure



those applications, while providing end-users with the functionality they need.

To date, however, the BYOD conversation has been around bringing mobile devices into the traditional environment. That’s changing as mobile devices become the platform of choice. MAM enables IT to adjust the end-user computing model to accommodate the inherent characteristics of mobility.

MAM also facilitates a transition toward a device-agnostic paradigm. This is increasingly important as mobile technology evolves. Organizations are beginning to manage tablets as well as smartphones and each has its own application management requirements. The number and type of devices is only going to escalate, making device-agnostic management imperative.

The “personal cloud” goes hand in hand with MAM and the enterprise app store. Personal cloud solutions enable IT to provide seamless, secure access to business apps and data to any device, with identity-based provisioning and policy-based control.

As BYOD continues to grow and evolve, a number of experts have debated whether it makes more sense to manage the applications accessed by mobile devices or the devices themselves. Some contend that MDM is still needed to provide end-to-end enterprise mobility management. Others have predicted that MDM will be absorbed into MAM through industry consolidation. But most all agree that MAM is on the rise.

MDM will continue to be valid for years to come, especially in highly secured environments, but it is a trend that has started to run its course. MAM enables IT to quit managing devices and instead focus on securing applications and data.



the **Big Picture**

Digital video is here to stay. How will you deal with it?

If a picture is worth a thousand words, what is a video worth? It's a legitimate question for organizations in the YouTube age. Consumer demand for video content has never been greater, and the surge is naturally spilling over into the workplace in the form of video-conferences, webcasts, training aids, product launches and more.

The proliferation of video content in the enterprise is just another example of a "bottom-up" technology that gains a foothold through personal usage and eventually becomes ubiquitous within an organization. Open-source software, instant messaging and social networking are other examples of technologies that gained widespread grassroots popularity before eventually being brought under the official IT umbrella.

A new generation is entering the management ranks of companies worldwide, and like previous generations, they will bring with them their own preferred ways of communicating and collaborating. A global study by Cisco revealed that the majority of these next-generation executives intend

to depend heavily upon business-class video to connect with their teams, colleagues, suppliers, customers and prospects, as well as to help their businesses deliver new products and services.

Video on the Rise

The 2013 Cisco Global Young Executives' Video Attitudes Survey gives insight into what management-track leaders aged 34 and under think about business-class video, which delivers high-quality, reliable and highly secure lifelike video to users. While 61 percent of young executives said they will rely more heavily on business-class video in the next five to 10 years, 70 percent of those who aspire to managing teams with 51 or more members said they will rely more heavily on video as their careers progress.

As video is clearly on the rise among young executives, what do they perceive as the medium's main benefits both today and tomorrow?

Today, the top three benefits young executives stated they derive from video are the ability to read visual cues, to “be there” without travelling and to share content in real-time. Tomorrow they anticipate video technology innovations will allow them to both customize and enhance the experience — both things one cannot readily do when face to face.

Customizing the experience includes, for example, the ability to quickly edit and/or cut a video recording from a meeting and share it via social media tools, and to understand the dynamics of a business video meeting-in-progress when they join late by privately watching/listening/scanning content from earlier in the meeting. Features that take the conversation to the next level include real-time language translations (for example, closed captioning for telepresence) and pop-up bubbles that would provide background information on participants from sources such as LinkedIn and Salesforce.com.

Organizational Impact

The survey showed 87 percent of respondents believe video has a significant positive impact on an organization. They indicated the top three organizational benefits are reducing travel costs, building rapport and improving the telecommuting experience.

Nearly nine out of 10 (87 percent) stated a company’s video investment would sway their decision-making process

when considering otherwise equal job offers. Respondents said that an enterprise-wide commitment to video technology would make them “feel like the company cares about using technology to fuel business growth.”

As video technology continues to advance, young executives’ future needs are anticipated to evolve as well. Survey data shows that if video were as simple to use and as pervasive as other common communications tools (desk/mobile phone, instant message, email), the majority of young executives would utilize video quite often: 84 percent said they’d turn to video for at least one out of every four interactions when they are not physically in the same location as the person or persons with whom they are collaborating. Moreover, 53 percent indicated they are would-be “power users” who would turn to video for 50 percent to 100 percent of their non-face-to-face interactions.

The study showed that as the importance of a business conversation increases, young executives’ tolerance for low-quality (such as Internet-based) video decreases. In fact, for critical communications, most respondents say they simply would forego the use of video if the quality was not high. Next-generation leaders indicated “low quality video would be acceptable” for internal meetings (25 percent), ad hoc / when travelling (22 percent), suppliers (17 percent), customers/prospects (12 percent) and critical communications such as board and CEO discussions (10 percent).

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