



ASG reduces costs with a VoIP solution from Nortel Networks

ASG

Devoted to helping clients reduce operating costs, enhance customer service, and differentiate their products in the marketplace

Mission

Partner with clients to improve productivity and significantly enhance performance through the intelligent use of technology

Business Challenge

Quickly integrate company acquisitions and reduce costs

Network Challenge

Globally deploy Voice over IP solutions

ASG is a global enterprise offering a comprehensive suite of Identity, Applications, Operations, Information, Performance, and Infrastructure Management solutions. They also deliver business re-engineering, systems integration, and systems development to meet the critical business needs of the Global 5000.

ASG was founded in 1986, and is headquartered in Naples, Florida, USA. Under the direction of president and CEO Art Allen, ASG has experienced significant success through internal growth and numerous strategic acquisitions. ASG has more than 7,000 customer sites, 18,000 licenses, and 40 offices throughout the world.

Integration and assimilation

ASG has completed well over 30 acquisitions in its history, with many more planned in the near future. Each time a new company is acquired, the ASG Telecommunications department faces the challenge to quickly and efficiently assimilate and enhance the technology obtained, while integrating communications and business processes - in the most cost-effective way possible.

Several years ago, ASG began a search for a voice platform on which to standardize its operations and streamline the integration process of acquired companies. The leadership position that Nortel Networks holds in the voice market with the integration of multiple voice applications was a deciding factor in ASG

standardising on Meridian 1 PBXes and Symposium Call Center for its voice platforms. Later, when looking to upgrade to a cost-saving Voice over IP solution, Aaron Isban, director of worldwide telecommunications at ASG, sought advice from another global software company with extensive experience in implementing VoIP. He was told that Nortel Networks has the most mature and most reliable VoIP solution on the market. The ease and low cost to IP-enable ASG's existing Meridian 1 PBXes along with the ability to network its Symposium call centres brought ASG back to Nortel Networks once more.

"Without a doubt, Nortel Networks simply had a better solution and a better price," said Isban. "It is the perfect solution. ASG continues to develop solutions on Nortel Networks platforms and they have proven to be completely reliable. We like to call it a 'best-in-class' solution."

Using ASG's global Wide Area Network (WAN) data network to implement a global VoIP strategy allows ASG to quickly integrate acquired companies while at the same time saving on international long distance charges.

Easy implementation

Adding VoIP to its existing Meridian systems simply involved installing a Meridian Internet Telephony Gateway (ITG) for high-quality voice transmission on the WAN network.

"It is really very simple to implement," said Isban. "The card is installed into the PBX, IP addresses are assigned to the different segments, the dialling plans are downloaded, and test calls are placed - that's it! With the right IP addressing planned in advance, the entire process takes no more than 20-30 minutes. Offices are added to our VoIP network by simply purchasing an ITG card."

The ITG Trunk card allows for incremental additions of IP routes for voice between Meridian 1 switches. The ITG cards monitor Quality of Service (QoS) parameters across the data network to deliver high quality voice. ASG has also enabled a least cost routing strategy that directs calls over its own VoIP WAN insuring the highest cost savings possible.

Measurable business improvement

With the help of Nortel Network's VoIP solutions, ASG has seen a drastic improvement in its ability to quickly integrate acquired companies and offices into its network and integrate customer support functions.

In Europe, ASG uses Symposium Express skills based routing to direct first-level support calls by language, providing service to its customers in their native language. The product engineers provide second-level support, and are usually located remotely from the call centre. However, by using the VoIP network to route those calls, ASG has gained a tighter integration and reduced costs.

ASG call centres in St Albans UK, Denver, and Phoenix USA are now linked together and integrated with other ASG offices for greater efficiency. Costs have been reduced and customer service improved. ASG can also use local numbers to route calls over the VoIP WAN to the Symposium Express-based call centres using the local Meridian 1 PBX, thus maintaining a local presence with all the benefits and cost savings of centralized service delivery.

Better integration with reduced costs

Tighter integration is backed up with impressive cost savings. International long distance bills for ASG have been drastically reduced, and further reductions are anticipated as more locations are added to the VoIP WAN. "With Paris, Düsseldorf, and Munich now

linked to St. Albans in the UK and routed from there over to Naples in the U.S., we have saved 70% on international long distance bills," said Isban. "Savings will continue to increase as ASG continues to grow its VoIP network in Europe, Asia, Australia, and South America."

Additionally, ASG is finding other areas to save. "By using Distance Steering Codes routed over our IP trunks, ASG has been able to link multiple offices to single voicemail systems," said Isban. "There is an immediate cost savings of roughly \$10,000-\$15,000 per office because ASG does not need to install voicemail applications in every site."

Isban calculates that with direct cost savings alone, ASG has achieved a six-month payback on the investment to convert to VoIP. Remote Office 9115 is also allowing for the integration of smaller offices with the same features and functionality but at a dramatically lower cost than installing a full PBX.

A Clear Migration Path

Starting with its Naples headquarters, ASG has IP-enabled its Meridian systems in Denver, Phoenix, Paris, and St. Albans (UK). Local German dealers GF Netcom and Citrus helped ASG upgrade Düsseldorf and Munich and will provide continued maintenance and support. Soon to follow are Arlington, Sao Paulo, Tokyo, Copenhagen, Madrid, Melbourne, and Sydney.

Today, ASG is able to quickly upgrade to VoIP over the WAN with a simple addition of the ITG trunk card. Tomorrow, it could deploy the Nortel Networks Succession Communication Server - the next-generation, Internet Protocol (IP) communication server - and all systems would still interoperate as smoothly and reliably as today. ASG has investment protection with Nortel Networks.

"The best part of having Nortel Networks is that we can leverage our existing equipment and yet there is a clear migration path to a complete IP solution when the time is right," said Isban. "We are using Nortel Networks solutions to network different applications, different offices, and different people in different places. We are wrapping our arms around the entire globe and bringing everyone together. At the same time, we are saving money. I am very excited about what we at ASG have accomplished with the help of Nortel Networks."

Solution Summary

Nortel Networks Succession IP Enabled Meridian 1 PBX systems and Symposium Express Call Center Servers have allowed ASG to quickly and easily implement a state-of-the-art, global VoIP solution with the simple addition of the Meridian Internet Telephony Gateway. Remote Office 9115 is the perfect solution for ASG to integrate small offices and remote workers.

Nortel Networks would like to thank ASG for its contribution to this case study. For more information about ASG go to www.asg.com

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Publication ref: ENT039CS0902En

Produced October 2002