PBX Replacement Software Boosts Operational Efficiencies for the Small Enterprise

CASE STUDY

SERVER

ABOUT SERVER PRODUCTS, INC.

Server Products, Inc. manufactures products for serving, dispensing and merchandising a wide variety of food items, including condiments, sauces and salad dressings. The company is headquartered in Richfield, WI and has more than 120,000 square feet of operating space. Server Products was founded in 1949.

THE PROBLEM

By early 2001, Server Products had outgrown its existing facility and decided to consolidate its manufacturing, warehouse and business offices to more effectively service its more than 10,000 global customers. At the time, the company was using a basic phone system to provide its 40 employees with PBX and voice mail functionality. While the system offered adequate features, Server Products wanted a solution that was easier to use with fewer interfaces. As a small business, the company also wanted a solution that could grow with it by allowing for incremental upgrades.

EIC's unified messaging feature enables users to access messages, view faxes and listen to voice mails on the desktop

"We wanted a communications solution that would enable us to add features as we needed them without forklift upgrades," says Ron Ripple, vice president of Server Products. "We also wanted to take advantage of enhanced applications, like call routing, unified messaging and presence management. Our goal was to leverage our entire organization as an informal contact center in order to provide the kind of sophisticated customer service options associated with larger organizations."

THE SOLUTION

After reviewing various telecommunications and computer telephony integration solutions, Server Products found that the vast majority of these products were assembled by using applications from different vendors. The company was concerned that these multiple interface points would cause undue cost and complexity when it came time to installing and maintaining the product.

As a result, Server Products began looking at a server-based, PBX alternative called *Enterprise Interaction Center®* (EIC) from Interactive Intelligence. The company liked the product because of its open, "all-in-one" architecture designed to reduce integration and simplify maintenance.

"We visited other vendors for on-site demonstrations prior to seeing the Interactive Intelligence software," Ripple says. "The vendors had such a hard time showing even their products' basic feature sets, however, that we wondered how much more difficult things would get when it came time to install, customize and maintain the real thing. In contrast, Interactive Intelligence was able to demonstrate a wide array of EIC applications quickly and without a hitch. Overall, its ease-of-use, elegant architecture and twenty percent lower price tag convinced us that EIC was the best solution."

The EIC deployment was completed in September 2001 to coincide with the completion of Server Products' new building. Today, all 40 Server Products' employees use EIC for voice mail, auto attendant, unified messaging, basic call routing and fax services.

EIC's auto attendant is configured so that customers can go directly to customer service, can be routed to an operator, or can dial by name. If customer service is selected, EIC routes the caller to a predefined group of employees based on the last time that employee
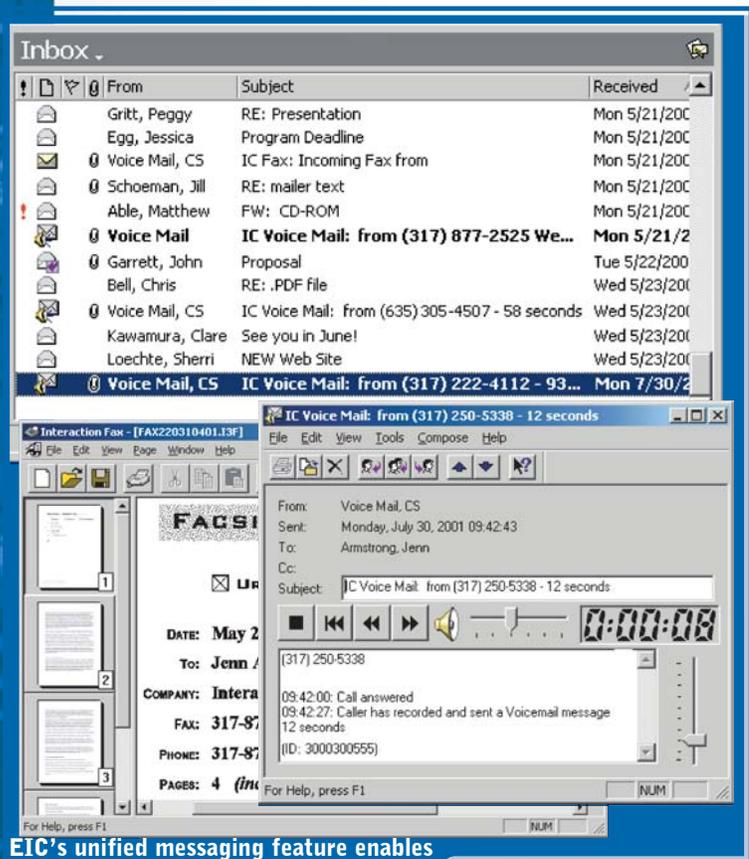
took a call, or, if nobody is available, the caller is routed to the next available representative.

Server Products' employees also use EIC's PC-based soft phone, called *Interaction Client*™. Interaction Client contains call-handling buttons - such as record, transfer, park and conference - in addition to a company directory where employees can create speed dial lists and view the real-time status of co-workers. Options include "Available," "Out to Lunch," "In A Meeting," "On Vacation," and others. In addition, employees can create special tabs to view the status of employee groups, such as customer service representatives.

EIC's unified messaging feature integrated with Microsoft Exchange provides employees with a universal in-box where they can send and receive voice, fax and e-mail messages. This also enables remote employees to check all message types from any touch-tone phone.

To provide advanced customization and support of EIC, Server Products hired Wauwatosa, WI-based reseller, Attalus Communications (www.attaluscom.com).

One custom project of special significance to the company's warehouse employees was a paging system. Attalus used EIC's graphical Interaction Administrator® interface to create the application, which enables the company receptionist to easily send alphanumeric pages to anyone on the shop floor. Using the park feature, the receptionist can send calls to "dummy" phones for pick up by warehouse employees.

Attalus is currently working with Server Products to design an advertising application for customers on hold.

THE BENEFITS

Server Products credits EIC with increased productivity, improved operational efficiencies and enhanced customer service.

"EIC's call routing, auto dialer and unified messaging have significantly increased employee productivity," Ripple says. "Employees spend less time trying to figure out how to work a given feature and more time communicating efficiently with customers and co-workers. We can also better document incidents by storing faxes and voice mail messages in electronic folders."

Ripple says that the company receptionist learned the new system within hours, and, today, a single support person manages EIC, along with the rest of the company's IT and telecom equipment.

"Since installing EIC, we've done a much better job of utilizing resources," Ripple adds. "A big part of this was the expertise of our reseller, Attalus. "They were extremely knowledgeable about EIC and went the extra mile in helping us to get up to speed quickly. In fact, Attalus completed our recent EIC upgrade in only three days and we had absolutely no downtime."

Perhaps most importantly, says Ripple, is the fact that EIC has "future-proofed" the company.

"We're a small business so we can't afford to invest in technology that doesn't have a long shelf-life. EIC's open, software-based architecture safeguards our investment and enables us to grow our services incrementally as business demands. That gives us huge peace of mind and makes EIC a truly integral part of our business," Ripple concludes.

Interaction Client
communications console
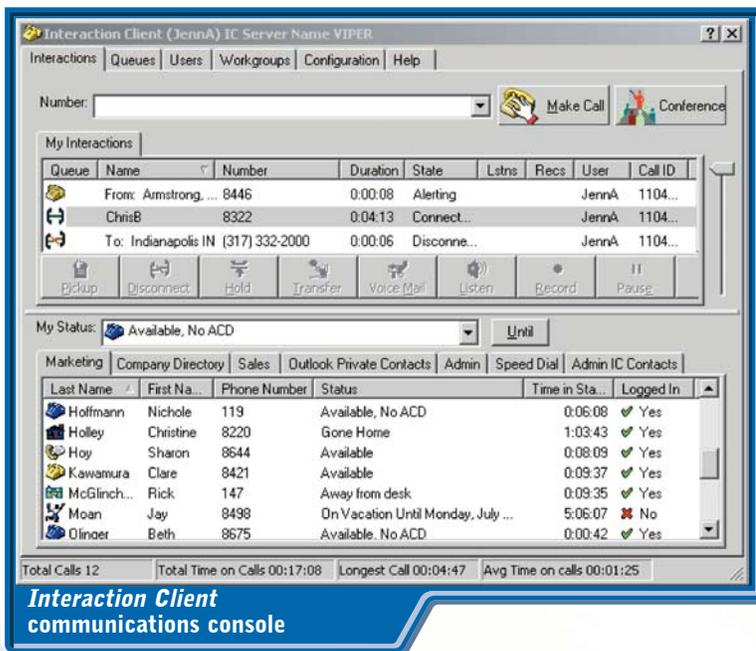
ABOUT INTERACTIVE INTELLIGENCE INC.

Interactive Intelligence Inc. (Nasdaq: ININ) is a global developer of software for IP telephony, contact center automation and unified communications. The company was founded in 1994 and has more than 1,000 customers worldwide. Recent awards include Software Magazine's 2002 Top 500 Global Software and Services Companies, and the Deloitte & Touche 2002 Technology Fast 500. Interactive Intelligence employs approximately 350 people and is headquartered in Indianapolis, IN. The company has more than 20 offices throughout North America, Europe and Asia.

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