



AVST CallXpress® Unifies Messaging For The City of Oceanside

BACKGROUND

Father Juan Crespi founded the City of Oceanside, California in 1769 as a potential mission site. Today, with the help of their information technologies director, Michael Sherwood, Oceanside has evolved into one of the most technologically innovative cities in the country. With a big vision, a small budget and the AVST technology, Sherwood has taken Oceanside out of the technology stone age and into the future. With AVST CallXpress® unified messaging, Sherwood is saving his IT department six man-hours a day in timesavings and the city \$30,000 a year in administration costs. What is the result for the citizens of Oceanside? They now benefit from faster and more efficient service from every sector of their city.

THE CHALLENGE

When Michael Sherwood accepted the position as IT director for Oceanside, he knew he had a big task ahead of him. A single server and no network supported approximately 13,000 city employees. Sherwood began by standardizing all PCs and software used by Public Safety (fire, police, lifeguard and harbor), City Government (building inspection, planning, clerks, etc.), and the Public Sector offices (library, community centers, etc.). He outfitted all city employees with a Compaq computer and chose Microsoft® Windows® as the citywide desktop operating system. He then decided on Microsoft Exchange® and Outlook® as the city's email system.

With a scalable infrastructure in place, Sherwood turned his attention to the city's network, which at the time did not support email, Internet access or even the exchange of files. In addition to the new network, Sherwood also wanted a new phone system to aide all the city

departments in everything from desktop messaging to call processing. However, his budget did not allow him to do both.

After researching all his options, Sherwood decided to deploy an ATM (asynchronous transfer mode) network, instead of the more common Ethernet, at the backbone and to the desktop citywide. This gave Sherwood the ability to support voice and data at the desktop.

With the ATM network in place, Sherwood began looking at various PBX options that could meet Oceanside's many needs. Sherwood decided that given the budget constraints and Oceanside's needs, an IP switch was the best choice. This proprietary, legacy circuit-based switch would allow Oceanside to consolidate the voice, data and video networks into one, saving the city an enormous amount of time and money in administration.

Sphere Communications' Sphericall IP switch was a perfect fit. The Sphericall switch runs on a Compaq server running Microsoft Windows and interacts with the Exchange servers. With its PBX features, it interconnects the Public Switched Telephone Network, CallXpress unified messaging / Auto Attendant system and users' telephones using Oceanside's ATM data network with guaranteed high level voice quality.

It was vital to Sherwood that Oceanside's IP switch be both cost-effective and extremely fault-tolerant. The Sphericall switch gave Oceanside triple redundancy at a greatly reduced price. Each city department (Public

Safety, City Government and the Public Sector) is connected to its own Spherical switch. If one of the IP switches goes down, the other two seamlessly pick up the load. This system ensures mission-critical calls, such as those to the Police or Fire Department, will always get through.

“As we started creating departmental file servers, we realized the bandwidth was constrained so we chose the Spherical switch to run ATM-based voice, data and live video,” said Sherwood. “Spherical is a great IP switch but we needed to find a robust system that fully integrated with and supported our call-processing and messaging needs.”

There were also problems and inefficiencies with the current voicemail system. Oceanside had an Octel voicemail system that could not perform the depth and breadth of services the city needed on a daily basis. The old system also required expensive upkeep. “The Octel system was very hard to administer so we were spending \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year outsourcing that work to independent contractors,” said Sherwood.

In addition to the cost of administration, the Police Department needed advanced call processing to handle the 1000 to 2500 calls they received every day from citizens. “The Oceanside PD switchboard was totally overwhelmed by the sheer number of calls,” said Sherwood. “With our limited budget, we had to find a cost-effective solution that did not include increasing headcount.”

Oceanside also needed better menuing capabilities for all the city departments. The current system did not allow them to record customized greetings for each department. For example, if just the library closed at 5:30 p.m. and wanted to record an after-hours greeting listing the hours of operation, every department’s would reference the same closing time of 5:30.

THE SOLUTION

Sherwood researched various messaging solutions and decided Oceanside needed both advanced and unified messaging. He then looked at several competing unified messaging vendors and chose AVST Inc. for all of Oceanside’s unified messaging and advanced call processing needs.

Key partnerships such as those with Intel/Dialogic, Microsoft and Lotus Corporation have helped to make AVST the largest independent unified messaging provider in the industry. CallXpress enables its users to access all three message types—voice, fax, and email—from a telephone, a PC, or the Internet. CallXpress is a high capacity, fault-tolerant unified messaging system that fully integrates with next-generation IP PBXs. It allows users to manage all of their messages from their familiar email inbox. When out of the office or on the road, users can also access and manage all of their messages from any telephone worldwide.

“We reviewed solutions from three vendors but ended up going with AVST because of their experience with delivering advanced, reliable and easy-to-use unified messaging on a Windows platform,” said Sherwood. “AVST offered the only system that maximized our investment in open standards, including the Windows platform, was scalable to support our growth moving forward, and included a tightly integrated and well-known fax solution. In terms of cost, no one could beat the AVST total package. By going with CallXpress, we spent half as much as we would have spent had we not gotten an AVST call processing systems for the price of one of the competing systems we considered.”

Very significant to any telephony-based solution is its integration with a company’s switch. Oceanside was very satisfied to learn that CallXpress integrated seamlessly with the Spherical switch they had implemented. “We were told that next-generation PBX/switch systems are still relative newcomers to the marketplace but we have been extremely please with its performance. CallXpress integrated beautifully,” said Sherwood. “We have a tremendously wide range of functionality that we need our



messaging software to perform on a daily basis. Not only has unified messaging from AVST met our needs, we've had zero problems with the software since implementing it."

AVST Call Manager has allowed the Oceanside Police Department to manage the large volume of calls they receive every day. Call Manager provides valuable information an operator needs in order to determine if an incoming call should take priority over what he or she is currently doing. Police Department operators can view information such as hold times, the caller's name and phone number on their PCs and can choose to answer a call, forward it, request that the caller hold, or reply to the caller with a prerecorded message.

"Call Manager has made things much easier," said Sherwood. "It allows the operators to see how many calls are in queue and helps them categorize callers' needs so that callers can be routed much faster without having to go through an operator."

RESULTS

"Between CallXpress desktop unified messaging and Call Manager, we are more efficient and better-able to serve our customers, the citizens of Oceanside," said Sherwood. "Before AVST, there was a two day turn-around time between when someone left a message asking for assistance or information, and when we were able to get back to them with an answer. Now, it takes about four hours. AVST has definitely streamlined our operation."

Oceanside has already seen a return on their investment through time and cost savings associated with CallXpress' advanced and unified messaging capabilities. "We fully recuperated our investment in three months," said Sherwood. "CallXpress saves my IT department six man-hours a day in configuration and administration. In terms of cost savings, CallXpress saves Oceanside approximately \$30,000 per year, in maintenance, repair and administration alone, and that's not even taking into account the increased employee productivity."

According to Sherwood, the RightFax™ desktop faxing capability in CallXpress has greatly improved employee productivity. "Most Oceanside employees were spending 15 to 30 percent of their day waiting to send or receive faxes," said Sherwood. "There was also the problem of lost or misrouted faxes. Now, employees can send and receive faxes without ever leaving their desk. Faxes are also kept confidential and always get to the intended recipient because each fax is delivered straight into their Outlook inbox."

Oceanside employees are also pleased with the other benefits of CallXpress unified messaging. "Employees can be anywhere in the city and get all their messages from a phone or their laptop," said Sherwood. "There's a wealth of things they can do now that they couldn't do before we deployed CallXpress."

Sherwood also feels confident that CallXpress and Call Manager will be able to continue to meet Oceanside's needs in the future. "The AVST system is completely robust," said Sherwood. "CallXpress has given us everything we need not just for today, but for many years to come."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Applied Voice and Speech Technologies, Inc. ("AVST") is an emerging force in the unified communications ("UC") marketplace uniquely combining the strengths of its world-class messaging platform, CallXpress®, with its innovative speech applications platform, Seneca™, to create a powerful, next-generation unified communications solution. The Company's products are designed to scale and support organizations of all sizes. For more information please contact us at: www.avstgroup.com or +1.949.699.2300.

