

Managed Service Provider, NACR leverages Nectar's Unified Communications Diagnostics for an Optimized Lync UC Experience

The Microsoft Lync Unified Communications Challenge

Within the field of Unified Communications (UC), NACR offers a broad range of Microsoft integration capabilities for voice, video, voicemail, IM, presence, and conferencing. As a Microsoft Gold Partner, the company employs a host of dedicated engineers who specialize in best-of-breed Microsoft Lync UC integration in order to help customers maximize their legacy investments and optimize their communications infrastructure.

For Microsoft Lync Enterprise Voice environments, however, troubleshooting issues such as call quality or call drops can be time-consuming and resource-intensive since the majority of Lync monitoring solutions are not proactive and require the user to first experience a poor or failed call and then report that call to the help desk. In such a scenario, the NACR Lync support team must extensively research the issue – often engaging the user again to try to recreate the original problem – in order to capture trace data and determine the root cause of the performance issue.

In addition, the company's integration team must perform a network assessment in order to confirm that the network quality of service (QOS) function is properly configured, as well as locate any potential bottlenecks. The team must also confirm that the Lync QOS is enabled and working correctly prior to handing off any still unresolved issues to the support team.

The level of effort involved in gathering detailed tracing information across complex environments, as well as the inability to easily and efficiently coordinate multiple resources from three or more teams contributes to a

“As with any new phone system, users are very sensitive to call drops and poor audio quality, particularly when it did not happen with the ‘old system.’ Once an end-user loses faith with the new system, it’s very hard to get their trust again.”

cumbersome resolution process that often takes up to two weeks to complete. In an environment where user adoption is critical and sensitivity to call drops and poor audio quality is high, users can quickly lose faith in the UC solution. Once it is gone, restoring user trust is extremely difficult, if not impossible.

As one of the world's leading independent integrators of comprehensive Unified Communications solutions and services, NACR supports a wide range of customers across a variety of vertical markets, including medical, financial, education and government segments. For these customers, NACR offers fully Managed Services for all IT related activities, as well as software release management and day 2 support for voice solutions that are implemented by the company's professional services teams.

With a team of more than 950 customer-focused and certified employees, NACR can act as single source provider for everything from sales, assessment, design, and testing to implementation, hosting, managed services, project management, training, and ongoing support. With extensive knowledge, experience, and certifications across a broad range of products and applications, NACR is able to provide its customers with a roadmap for integrating the best technology to meet their needs today and in the future.



NACR Network Operations Center

Making a Better User Experience a Reality

When faced with the difficult scenario outlined above, NACR began to investigate other options that would enable their service and support teams to resolve Lync call issues more quickly and provide for a better user experience. Because the company was already using Nectar Services Corp's Unified Communications Management Platform (UCMP) to deliver exceptional end-to-end service management across integrated voice, data, security, applications, and video networks, the decision to utilize the Nectar UCMP Unified Communications Diagnostics™ (UCD) module was simple.

According to Nathan Knaak, NACR's Advanced Diagnostics Engineer for MSS Pro Services/Unified Communications Support, "after seeing the live data that could be captured from a poor or dropped call, as well as the inherent alerting capabilities available with the Nectar UCD module, I realized that troubleshooting Lync Enterprise Voice calls could now be done efficiently and proactively. Because the UCD module is completely integrated with the Lync SDN API, we can see an issue as it is happening, see the network traces, and even see a report that shows at what point in the network the issue has occurred."

Microsoft Lync Network Challenges:

- Lack of real-time session quality;
- An inability to map the Lync call path through a routed network;
- The need to expand Lync monitoring beyond post-call averages from a Lync QoE database;
- Issue identification and isolation is very expensive and time-consuming;
- A limited ability to correlate data across multi-vendor environments operating in most Lync deployments;
- Issues lead to constant finger-pointing, stalled Microsoft Lync deployments, and much slower Lync adoption.

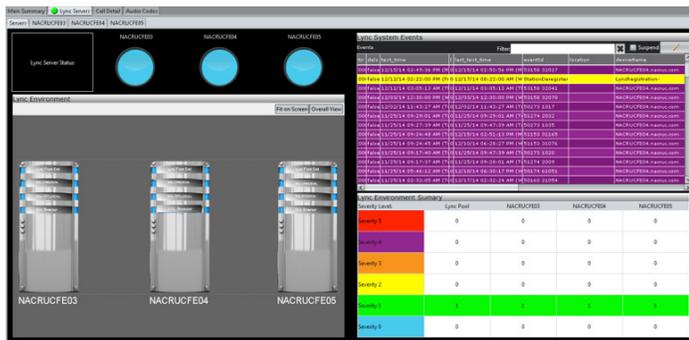
Nectar UCD Quickly Isolates and Resolves Performance Issues

The unique way in which the UCD module is integrated with the Microsoft Lync Software-defined Networking (SDN) API allows real-time visibility into the overall quality and performance of the user experience by uniquely monitoring session content and network topology.

Nectar UCD Dashboard for end-to-end Lync visibility

This correlation capability allows NACR help desk agents to instantly associate specific user-reported complaints to any events in any part of the network. Alerts and notification thresholds are configurable through interactive dashboards. Visualization of historical trends allows for executive-level tracking, management, and decision making that can, ultimately, improve the user's experience and help anticipate operational requirements such as capacity planning.

"In addition to the Nectar UCD being integrated with the Lync Enterprise voice system using the Lync SDN API, we are also using the complete UCD solution configured on the network to monitor SIP/RTP traffic," said Knaak. "So we can also see call details for other integrated UC platforms as well."



Improving Productivity and Reducing Time to Resolution by 90%

Once the UCD module was deployed as an integrated component within the UCMP platform, NACR found that they were able to quickly troubleshoot and isolate Lync issues related to call quality as noted by the Call Detail Records (CDR) feature within the UCMP monitoring capability.

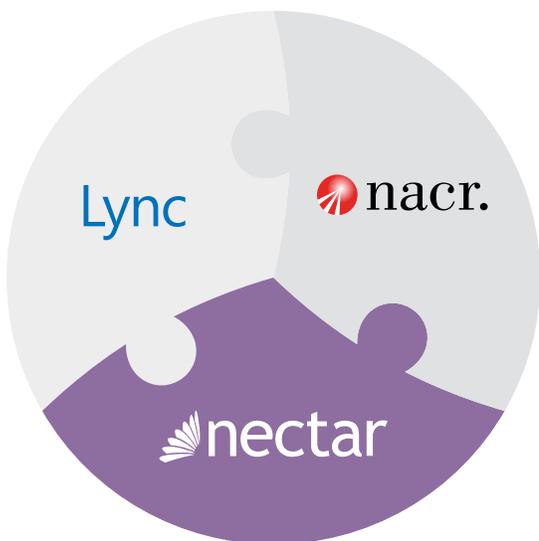
Further, it improved NACR's ability to localize an issue to a specific end-user, so an incident ticket could be opened under an individual's name for real-time problem identification and resolution. This meant that the support team could immediately identify the problem and respond to it, instead of waiting for the user to call the help desk after the problem had already occurred. "The

Because of the unique way in which the UCD software is integrated with the Lync SDN API, Microsoft has chosen Nectar as one of the few Depth Partners within the company's SDN API program. With the Nectar UCD module, customers can be assured of the highest quality Microsoft Lync deployment and experience.

UCD module improved the productivity of our support resources in terms of problem identification and reduced our time to resolution by as much as 90 percent," stated Knaak.

In addition, the UCD module significantly improved overall end-user satisfaction and buy-in for the Microsoft Lync Enterprise Voice system due to its proactive ability to support the system when call issues occurred. From a NACR business perspective, the UCD module "reduced

our overall costs by eliminating time-intensive testing and data gathering from multiple sources,” noted Knaak. “The single biggest reason that I would recommend this solution is the multi-point data analysis. Our ability to now view the whole environment, identify where the infrastructure is impacting the quality of a call, and then isolate the problem and resolve it before the end-user even calls the help desk is a major achievement.”



Because of their positive experience in utilizing the UCD module with Lync Enterprise Voice and high value conferences, NACR is evaluating new areas of potential growth. According to Luke Kannel, Sr. Unified Communications Engineer, “we see future growth with customers who are integrating with traditional PBXs and/or those who are transitioning to Lync as a PBX, as well as carrier services such as SBC monitoring and hosting providers.”

Powered by Nectar, NACR is delivering managed network performance monitoring services that help their customers improve productivity, efficiency, and customer satisfaction to create a better user experience. With this strategic technology partnership, NACR is delivering unparalleled

**Nectar Makes List of Top 100
Most Promising Microsoft
Solution Providers**



“CIO Review has selected the final 100 companies that are at the forefront of tackling today’s challenge in the Microsoft ecosystem.”

business value by providing IT organizations with the ability to quickly adapt to change, manage complexity, and deliver unique, quantifiable ROI reporting and monitoring for unified communications systems.

To learn more about how NACR can transform your company’s unified communications network into a highly responsive business asset, visit [NACR Ovation Managed Services](#).

To view a demonstration of how Nectar UCD for Lync deployments provides comprehensive insight into UC issues for fast resolution, lower TCO and a superior user experience, view the [Nectar UCD Demo Video](#).

About NACR

As the leading global integrator of business communication solutions and services since 1993, NACR has been a trusted advisor to more than 40% of Fortune 100 companies, helping them use technology to enhance the collaboration, contact center, and data communication experience.

About Nectar Services Corp.

Nectar Services Corp. delivers market-leading software solutions that dramatically improve visibility into the performance of Unified Communications networks. Providing predictable and actionable information, users can manage, monitor, and proactively troubleshoot UC

networks to improve service delivery across integrated voice, data, and video networks. Nectar software can be used with Microsoft Lync, Cisco, Avaya, and Nortel UC solutions.

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