



CASE STUDY





CASE STUDY

As one of the most well known media companies in the US, Clear Channel operates several divisions including media, entertainment and outdoor advertising. Clear Channel's Outdoor Advertising group alone operates nearly one million ad displays in more than 30 countries around the world. As is common with many companies having numerous offices, the Outdoor Advertising group, with over 50 locations across the US, had a problem. When it came to telephony, the offices used a wide variety of telephone systems from numerous manufacturers. As a result, there were major inconsistencies in feature sets from one office to the other. Every three or four years, each office needed to have its phone system replaced. But the offices didn't have technical staff working locally to help make standardized decisions. As a result, the continued disparity between phone systems and feature sets made it difficult to provide remote technical support.

The final straw was when six offices across the US called to complain that their telephones were out of service — all within the same month. Of those six offices, five had lost service due to a power outage or cut cable. The sixth office had technical issues with the phone system itself. Compounding the frustration for the technical support team was the inability to have any advance warning or alarming in place to help monitor these disparate systems — especially when senior management asked, "Why aren't you seeing outages in other offices when they occur and being proactive about fixing the problem?"



The frustration for the technical support team was the inability to have any advance warning or alarming in place to help monitor these disparate systems

It was time to look at centralizing the entire division on a unified communications (UC) platform. One that would provide a standard feature set across all the offices and allow for easier troubleshooting across the network and the country. While the investment would be substantial, the inherently more stable environment, advanced diagnostics capabilities, and far more robust feature set would be well worth the investment.

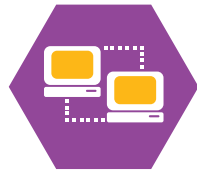
Chuck Condon, Clear Channel's Outdoor Division's Executive Support Engineer and Regional IT Manager teamed with Windstream, a Nectar Channel Partner, to consolidate the entire division's telephony network onto an Avaya Unified Communications platform.

This case study highlights how Clear Channel benefited from the Windstream/Nectar partnership by adopting a common UC platform across the enterprise, including a robust, fully integrated network monitoring and management system to ensure the highest levels of QoS within the organizations' communications network.

Clear Channel Rolls Out UC

Clear Channel's decision to migrate to Unified Communications across its 50 offices began with an evaluation of various UC solutions. After careful analysis, Clear Channel's CIO chose to standardize on the Avaya platform. A scaled proof of concept began with ten offices. The benefits of the widely expanded set of features and ease of monitoring were immediate. As part of a controlled rollout, every time an office required a new telephone system, Condon teamed with Windstream to install an Avaya system. As the network of offices grew, it became readily apparent that a monitoring tool was going to need to be

purchased. Windstream met with Condrón and demonstrated Nectar's Converged Management Platform (CMP).



“Right out of the box it immediately helped us solve a problem that had been going on for eight months.”

“Right out of the box it immediately helped us solve a problem that had been going on for eight months,” said Condrón. The division's West Palm Beach, FL office had been experiencing poor Quality of Service (QoS) for almost a year. Equipped with Avaya telephones and SIP trunking, the office had been complaining about dropped calls and poor audio quality. Despite numerous conversations with the carrier, Condrón had been unable to resolve the issue. The carrier insisted that they were providing QoS on the SIP trunks and the problem was within the office's local network. The IT department insisted that QoS was running on the internal network and it must be the carrier's fault. The circular argument continued for eight months as the office staff became more and more frustrated with calls that either broke up or wouldn't complete. Some of the staff had simply started using their mobile phone for work rather than deal with the poor quality of the phone system.

While being trained on CMP, Condrón asked the Nectar instructor if he could demonstrate the monitoring system using the Palm Springs office as the example. Using CMP's at-a-glance dashboard, Condrón could see exactly where the QoS issue began through CMP's dependency tree mapping and discovery automation of the Vendor Knowledge Modules (VKM's). Within the first week, monitoring reports clearly showed that telephone calls being initiated from the office had excellent QoS until they left the local router and began traversing the WAN. It was immediately apparent that QoS was not being provided by the carrier after all. Armed with screen shots and reports, Condrón

confronted the carrier's engineers with the evidence. Within a few hours the carrier admitted that QoS had not been applied to the trunks but that the problem had been rectified. "Without those screen shots I don't know if we would have ever gotten the problem resolved," said Condrón.



Without those screen shots I don't know if we would have ever gotten the problem resolved

Nectar's Converged Management Platform Continues to Deliver Results

As Condrón continues to roll out Avaya's UC platform to additional offices, Nectar's CMP remains a valuable monitoring and management tool for Condrón and his team. Recently one office that had been part of the UC network for about two years suddenly stopped receiving dial tone. The problem was intermittent and difficult to track. A support ticket was opened with Avaya but their engineers could not figure out the problem either. Since CMP can report on extension ranges and tracks and records all alarms, Condrón was able to run a report searching for any alarms attached to specific telephones in the office. What he discovered was that the phones, instead of logging into their assigned system in Phoenix, had "gone rogue". One moment they were logging into the Seattle office, five minutes later they would hop over and log into Chicago, then New York. "Because of the history that Nectar's CMP provided, I could see that every few minutes the phones were hopping around from office to office," said Condrón. He showed the Avaya engineers the reports and they immediately knew what the problem was and were able to fix it quickly. A critical card within the phone system itself had been removed. Once replaced, the phone system worked properly and has ever since.



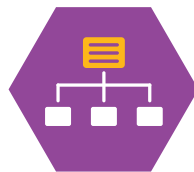
Because of the history that Nectar's CMP provided, I could see that every few minutes the phones were hopping around from office to office.



“Another handy feature that CMP offers is the QoS monitoring,” said Condrón. “We have SIP phones in each office and sometimes the SIP trunk will die. Someone will have cut a cable or the phone company will be having a problem. When that happens I see it immediately. The dashboard goes from green to red, empowering me to proactively reach out and inform the office of the problem. Since CMP records in real time, I can also see when the trunk is back in service,” concluded Condrón.

A Bright Future

In the near future, Condrón plans to extend Nectar’s functionality to include monitoring of the network routers in each office. Condrón discovered that in addition to giving his support team critical intelligence into the root cause of VoIP difficulties, Nectar’s CMP can monitor network components simultaneously. CMP also provides Clear Channel with advanced notification of trending issues, which will significantly reduce unplanned downtime.



The Nectar system is invaluable. While it does require an investment, for what it does and what it protects, I think it is well worth it.”

Certainly, UC has many benefits. However, in practice, to bring these types of business communications to the enterprise at large, companies require a powerful and robust monitoring and management tool such as Nectar’s Converged Management Platform. Nectar’s CMP delivered superior results in this case, and in Condrón’s own words, “The Nectar system is invaluable. While it does require an investment, for what it does and what it protects, I think it is well worth it.”