Major Global Financial Services Firm Achieves UC Consolidation Goals

With Nectar CMP Monitoring Solutions, Major Global Financial Services Firm Achieves UC Consolidation Goals

Every company today sees the value of best-in-breed collaborative solutions in their pursuit of competitive advantage and service excellence. For many, however, voice and data network scalability throws up an insurmountable roadblock, as proliferation of disparate technology vendors, communications platforms and software licenses make the ideal goal of true Unified Communications seem ever distant. With Microsoft solutions now accounting for up to 43% of the revenue produced in the Unified Communications arena, and more businesses making the shift to improved cloud-based services, companies have likewise shifted their attention to a new generation of collaboration tools.

For many firms today, the goal now is to find a better way to monitor these new, flexible alternative technologies in order to ensure the high call quality levels that business conversations require.

One major global financial services firm tackled these problems head on in 2008 with a global UC project centered on Avaya VoIP telephony platforms and Nectar CMP monitoring solutions. Faced with the daunting challenge of unifying 2,200+ locations in over 70 countries, more than 140,000 individual desktop phone endpoints, 30 different makes and models of telephony equipment, eight managed services providers and over a dozen call centers, the firm knew that achieving their goals would not be easy.

When they began gathering requirements for their UC plan, the bulk of their current challenges revolved around simple operational uptime. The high complexity of their existing communications technologies had led to a constant barrage of network and audit-related issues, as well as an excessive level of outage incidents caused by the company's very old infrastructure.

The company supported a highly heterogeneous telecommunications environment, including elements of VoIP solutions from Cisco, Siemens, legacy Nortel and Avaya. With the pressing need to modernize their call infrastructure while reducing complexity and costs, the team began reviewing options for transitioning to a single consolidated UC platform for their global telephony demands. The resulting best-in-breed proposal centered on Avaya VoIP telephony solutions, Microsoft UC solutions for IM and presence services, and Avistar for video conferencing.

Realizing that voice and video quality would be a paramount concern in any successful UC solution, the team evaluated various solutions for monitoring the performance of their newly consolidated data network and identifying potential trouble spots.

Adding to the challenges, each of the company's stakeholders had different vendor preferences. Voice, network, security, sourcing and Avaya specialists each had strong opinions about the UC monitoring technologies that would best fit their individual requirements. None of the proposed solutions, however, met all of the company's wide ranging specifications.

The firm required an easily deployable, cross platform network monitoring system that could manage many different platform brands using native vendor nomenclature. It needed to support over 55,000 channels of NICE voice recording globally. They wanted to be able to quickly identify and locate any seemingly minor equipment configuration flaw — from LAN/ WAN switches to firewalls and session border controllers — that negatively impacted their telephony voice quality. Most of all, the financial firm wanted a technology partner who was willing to provide leadership in the process, and to take a strong role in ensuring a successful transition to the new UC platform.

Their desktop telephony global managed services provider, suggested that they take a look at the Nectar CMP suite of network monitoring applications. The firm quickly recognized that from eadership, technical and licensing perspectives, Nectar offered the only comprehensive monitoring solution that provided for all of their needs.

Implementing Nectar alongside their new Avaya, Microsoft and Avistar integrations, the team quickly discovered hidden issues that greatly impacted the efficiency of their existing network. From misconfigured media servers to hardware and software faults in non-voice data equipment, their new and highly granularvisibility into their network revealed many areas for immediate and inexpensive improvements.

Their internal teams and managed services vendors all found the Nectar dashboards to be highly detailed, accurate and extremely intuitive. Every call could be tracked and examined in real time from start to end, with available statistics on the performance of each involved device and software component. Issues could be immediately tagged for remedy, or else could be quickly worked around before they grew into major impact events. The detailed intelligence generated by the Nectar monitoring platform proved to be a great ally in verifying SLA compliance and facilitating ITIL process benchmarks, both major objectives of the company's

UC initiative. The most powerful benefit that came from implementing Nectar, they found, was one that wasn't fully appreciated until they saw it firsthand: technology partnership and leadership. Nectar possessed the expertise necessary in order to gain the most advantage from their toolset. More than that, however, they were the only vendor explicitly willing to partner with the company on supporting their broad array of systems — NICE recording, session border controllers, IPC integrations and more — to improve the Nectar's development roadmap, as well as continuing to refine the company's own implementation.

That distinction enabled the company to successfully build a global IP telephony solution rather than being ultimately forced to rely on a costly and complex collection of niche installations. The visibility, scalability and highly detailed analytical power of their Nectar monitoring solutions enabled this global financial services firm to achieve all of their consolidation goals–reducing costs and complexity, future-proofing their communications, and assuring highly reliable and high quality communications around the world.