

Catapult Systems Projects \$250,000 in Savings from Move to VoIP and Unified Communications

Microsoft® Office Communications Server and Dialogic® Media Gateways Instrumental in Catapult's Unified Communications Success

CASE SUMMARY

Challenge

Faced with an expiring phone system lease and a CEO's vision of significantly improved communications, Catapult Systems began a project to upgrade its communications infrastructure. During the research phase of the project, Catapult learned about Microsoft's "VoIP As You Are" approach, which allows a business to keep its existing phone system and use Microsoft® software and media gateways to move to VoIP and Unified Communications (UC).



Solution

Catapult converted its corporate and branch offices to VoIP and UC quickly with Microsoft® Office Communications Server R2 and Dialogic® Media Gateways. With a centralized voice mail system, video conferencing, and greatly reduced telephone toll and meeting expenses, Catapult projects a savings of \$250,000 over three years and significantly increased productivity. In addition, Catapult, highly regarded in the industry for its IT expertise and responsive client support, decided to create a new UC practice because of its internal success with UC.

Challenge

Charged with upgrading Catapult Systems' communications infrastructure, Joe Stocker, Director of IT at Catapult, faced a major challenge. Catapult's phone system lease was ending, and the company, a leading Microsoft-focused IT consultancy that prides itself on bringing the latest cutting-edge technology to its clients, needed a sophisticated, cost-effective communications solution that would increase productivity and be very customer-friendly.

Stocker sent an RFP to ten major phone vendors for a new VoIP phone system, but during his intensive research, he learned about Microsoft's "VoIP As You Are" approach, which allows a business to move to VoIP while keeping its existing phone system. VoIP and Unified Communications (UC), which includes Unified Messaging, are enabled through UC software from Microsoft: Microsoft® Office Communications Server 2007 R2, Microsoft® Exchange Server 2007, and Microsoft® Office Communicator R2. The software is integrated with existing PBX and PSTN services via media gateways. "Our CEO is a visionary," recalls Stocker, "and he charged me with finding the most effective way for our firm to communicate. As we looked closely into the solutions available, we decided that the Microsoft approach was definitely the most compelling."

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Solution

As a Microsoft National Systems Integrator (NSI), an elite distinction for an IT consultancy, Catapult is well-versed in Microsoft® software. However, choosing a media gateway initially seemed to be a major challenge, but thanks to Microsoft's foresight and thorough testing program for media gateways, the choice was easy, according to Stocker. "The Dialogic® Media Gateway Series is certified by Microsoft, and we needed to choose a gateway that met rigorous Microsoft standards — and there are very few of those." Specifically, Stocker selected the T1 PRI-to-SIP Dialogic® DMG2030DTI Media Gateway, which was the right fit for Catapult.

Installation and configuration turned out to be simple. "We liked the fact that the Dialogic gateway worked almost right out of the box with very little configuration," says Stocker. "It seemed 'purpose-built' to work with OCS, probably because of all the testing and integration work that Dialogic had already done, which was certified by Microsoft. We turned it on, put in just a little bit of information, and were able to start making and receiving phone calls through the box immediately. I was really impressed with that."

Replacing PBXs with Gateways Brings Quick ROI

While he started out by following Microsoft's "VoIP As You Are" approach in the pilot program at corporate headquarters, Stocker realized that replacing the PBXs in the company's branch offices with DMG2030 Gateways could save Catapult significant phone system maintenance costs. "We were spending about \$16,000 a year for PBX maintenance," reports Stocker, "so replacing the PBXs meant considerable cost savings and quick ROI for the gateways. We could pay for the gateways in a single year with what we saved."

Fax and Conferencing Connected Easily with an FXS Gateway

Another challenge for Stocker was connecting analog fax machines and conferencing phones in offices where the PBX was replaced with a gateway. He decided to use the Grandstream FXS gateway (GXW4004) after he learned that Dialogic was supporting this device. "First of all, we thought the price point of the four-port model was very affordable for us, and then I found the Grandstream was also ready almost out of the box — just like the DMG2030DTIs," says Stocker.

"I can honestly say there were less than six things I had to change on the Grandstream to make it work between the analog devices and a DMG gateway — very straightforward, very repeatable, very reliable. And Dialogic provided a clean integration guide. It was almost surprising just how easy it was. When I made the first call and it worked the first time, I said 'Wait a minute here — don't I have to do some troubleshooting?' When the phone rang, I smiled ear to ear."

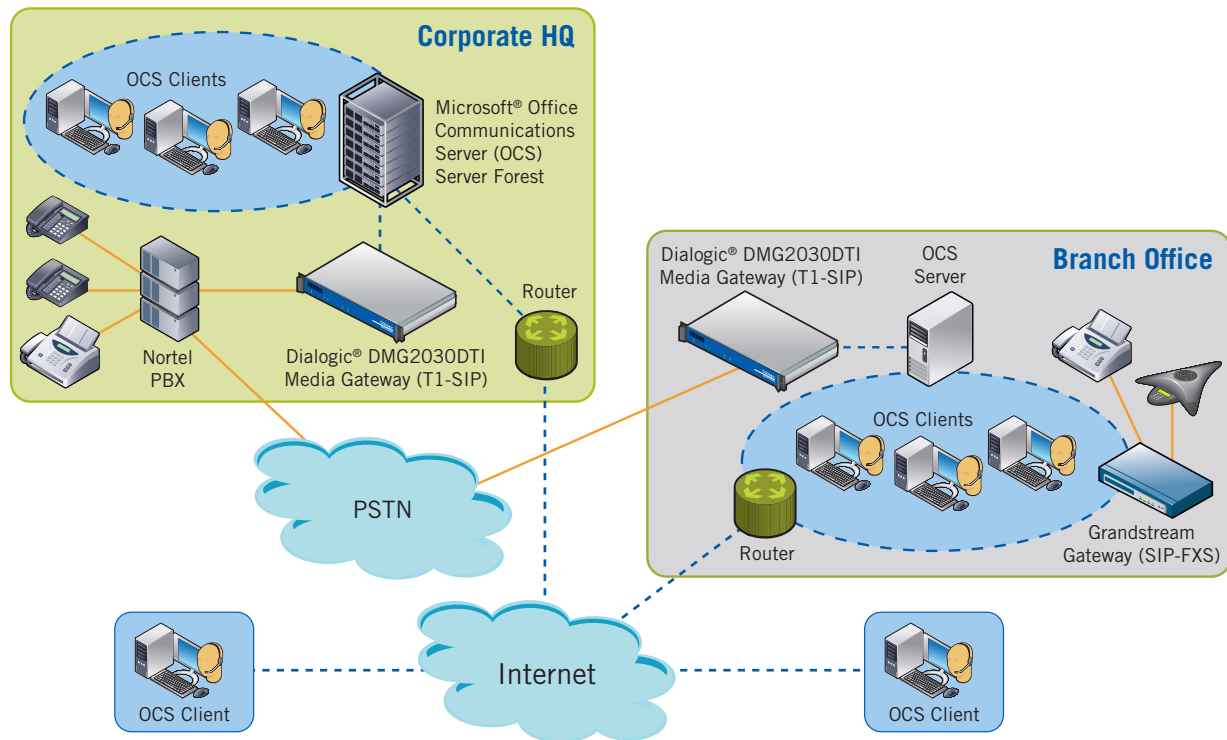
Phone System Upgrade Takes a Single Business Day

Because the pilot deployment in Austin was so successful, Stocker quickly brought UC to Catapult's other offices in San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, Denver, and Tampa. Replacing the phone system at each site took no longer than eight hours. "By the time I was ready to work on the third phone system in Dallas," remembers Stocker, "I had so much confidence that I booked a roundtrip ticket. I flew in from Austin at 9:30 a.m. and left at 5:30 p.m. for the airport. I configured the DMG and the OCS Mediation Server, did end user training, set up the Grandstream FXS to integrate the fax and conference phones — and I made it to the airport in plenty of time for my flight home."

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Catapult Systems Deployment

Centralized Voice Mail System an Added Benefit

Another feature valued by Catapult is the ability to use the Microsoft® Exchange Server for centralized voice mail, eliminating the need to have separate voice mail systems in each branch office. "We were very lucky too," adds Stocker. "Just prior to my arriving onsite, the voice mail system at one branch office failed, so in addition to the savings we made by leveraging Exchange Server to handle voice mail, we didn't have to make any investment in replacing the failed system. And a centralized voice mail system is a major benefit for us."

Results

Because Catapult quickly realized that "UC-DMG is really a game-changing technology," the Catapult executive team decided to accelerate their investment in building up a UC practice. Since Catapult experienced excellent results with Dialogic products, it formed a strategic partnership with Dialogic through its channel program. "After our experience, we were convinced that Dialogic not only had an outstanding product but also the organization, including the support organization, to back it up," says Stocker. "The proof for us was our successful deployment across all of our offices. Dialogic exceeded our expectations."

Counting the Savings

Microsoft and Dialogic have both created a wealth of resources for gauging productivity and monetary gains from adopting UC. Microsoft has a [special UC section](#) on its website, and UC studies by [UniComm](#) (refreshed in August 2009) and [Forrester Consulting](#) (2007) along with a [summary by Microsoft](#) (2009) are readily available. Dialogic also has a [special site](#), which includes in-depth information on using its gateways with Microsoft's UC software. Meanwhile, Catapult has done its own estimate of cost savings from moving to UC with Microsoft software and Dialogic gateways.

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Earlier in this case study, the following savings were discussed:

- **Maintenance costs for phone systems in branch offices** — PBXs were replaced with DMG2030DTI Gateways
- **Maintenance costs for voice mail systems in branch offices** — Voice mail is now centralized, eliminating the need for separate voice mail systems in each office
- **Replacement cost for failed voice mail system** — No replacement was necessary because voice mail is now centralized

Other cost savings include:

- **Toll charges** — Calls between Catapult offices now use VoIP and not the PSTN, which eliminates toll charges
- **Conference calls** — Office Communications Server allows Catapult to host its own audio bridge, saving the company at least \$2000 a month
- **Video conferencing** — UC connects Catapult offices for hosted Microsoft® Office Live Meetings via webcams, providing a significant reduction in meeting expenses. For example, its annual consultant gathering was held via Live Meeting, resulting in a savings of at least \$60,000 on travel and hotel expenses
- **Executive team meetings** — Travel expenses were cut in half because improved communication with UC and video conferencing allows executive team meetings to be held every other month, instead of every month

In all, Catapult projects that it will save over a quarter of a million dollars over the next three years now that all of its 243 employees are using UC.

End User Satisfaction Rated Very High

Because he knew that a new system, no matter how technically sophisticated, could not succeed without enthusiastic user acceptance, Stocker surveyed new UC users immediately after launching the pilot program in Austin. The results were as he had hoped. The new UC system received “a very high satisfaction rating — about 95%.”

“People feel empowered because their voice mails are now accessible to them on their mobile devices, through Outlook web access, and within their emails,” says Stocker. “Our staff really likes Click-to-Call where a contact's phone number is dialed automatically when they click on the person's name. And phone tag is reduced because of ‘presence’ that lets you see when someone is on a call, allowing you to wait to call them until they are available.”

Now Deploying to “Absolutely Thrilled” Key Customers

Because “reducing costs is on everyone's mind right now,” Catapult has already begun deploying UC solutions with Dialogic gateways to key customers. “They are absolutely thrilled,” according to Stocker, “and they are receiving the same savings and benefits that we are seeing with our solution.”

Also, when Catapult sales representatives go out in the field, they can access voice mail and get phone calls no matter where they are and on their device of choice. “Our customers are really impressed when they hear our laptops ring,” says Stocker. “Our sales people can be reached easily wherever they are, and customers no longer have to wait for a salesperson to get back to the office to access messages. It is incredible how many productivity benefits we are seeing.”

After his experience, Stocker now believes that UC is “one of a handful of technologies in this economic climate that is truly a no-brainer.” He has seen how much more effectively people communicate with UC, and he adds “as the person responsible for implementing our system, I know how important the Dialogic gateways are to enabling UC easily and cost-effectively.”

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About Catapult Systems

Catapult Systems Inc. provides Microsoft IT consulting services in enterprise solutions, infrastructure, and custom development. With offices in Austin, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Denver, and Tampa, Catapult implements secured, innovative technology solutions, enabling its clients to achieve their business priorities while deriving the maximum value from their Microsoft technology investments.

Catapult is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and National Systems Integrator (NSI). To date, Catapult holds 12 Microsoft competencies, placing it in the top 1% of Microsoft partners globally.

For more information, visit www.catapultsystems.com.

About Dialogic Corporation

Dialogic Corporation is a leading provider of world-class technologies based on open standards that enable innovative mobile, video, IP, and TDM solutions for Network Service Providers and Enterprise Communication Networks. Dialogic's customers and partners rely on its leading-edge, flexible components to rapidly deploy value-added solutions around the world.

For more information, visit www.dialogic.com.

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Information about Catapult Systems has been provided by Catapult Systems for this case study.