

Stratus Telecommunications Case Study: Startup Telecommunications Provider

Stratus Telecommunications' ENTICE™ E-REV solution helps Barbados service provider grow from startup to success in newly deregulated telecommunications market

Background

Blue Communications, Ltd. (www.blue.bb) rapidly developed from a new startup in May 2007 to a successful telephone company since it began using the Stratus ENTICE™ E-REV solution to provide wholesale interconnect and termination services, and a calling card offering in Barbados. The Bridgetown-based company, which also operates regional offices in Toronto, Buenos Aires, and St. Vincent, carried over 30 million minutes internationally in 2008. It will soon begin offering services in Jamaica.

The Challenge

After an exhaustive search to find the right technology platform for its startup telephone company in Barbados, Blue Communications finally discovered the Stratus Telecom ENTICE (Emerging Networks Telecommunications Infrastructure Control Environment) E-REV solution. However, the process to select its services deployment platform was neither short nor simple.

Following the decision to offer wholesale and retail telephone services in the newly deregulated Barbados telecommunications market, the company began evaluating session border controllers from a variety of equipment vendors, hoping to find one with the right combination of features, functionality, and cost. For over a year, Blue searched for a solution, asking numerous companies for quotes and specifications. However, information often was not forthcoming. Many vendors could not answer specific technical questions. Others offered only some of the required network elements, requiring Blue to find the other components and making eventual deployment more complicated. Some failed to return sales inquiry phone calls at all.

Eventually, Blue turned to Stratus Telecommunications. **“Stratus Telecom was the only vendor we found that had the integrated product suite, track record, and technical knowhow to address the complexities of doing business in this telecom environment,”** Blue Communications President Elliot Sachar said. **“The sales people and technical staff could answer most of our questions immediately and satisfactorily and what they didn't know off the top of their heads, they found out very quickly. That not only gave us confidence that we were picking the right product,**

it also told us that Stratus Telecom would be there to support us every step of the way.”

Implementing the Solution

At the end of the quest, Blue Communications deployed two ENTICE E-REV platforms, one in its main network operations center (NOC) in Bridgetown, and another in the NAP of the Americas data center in Miami. The systems work in conjunction with Dialogic IMG 1010 integrated media gateways to provide origination and termination services to international carriers. The ENTICE E-REV solution includes all elements required for end-to-end service delivery, including a Class 4 and Class 5 softswitch, session border controller, web portals, and host of applications. This made deployment easier than it would have been using multiple standalone components, especially for a startup provider.

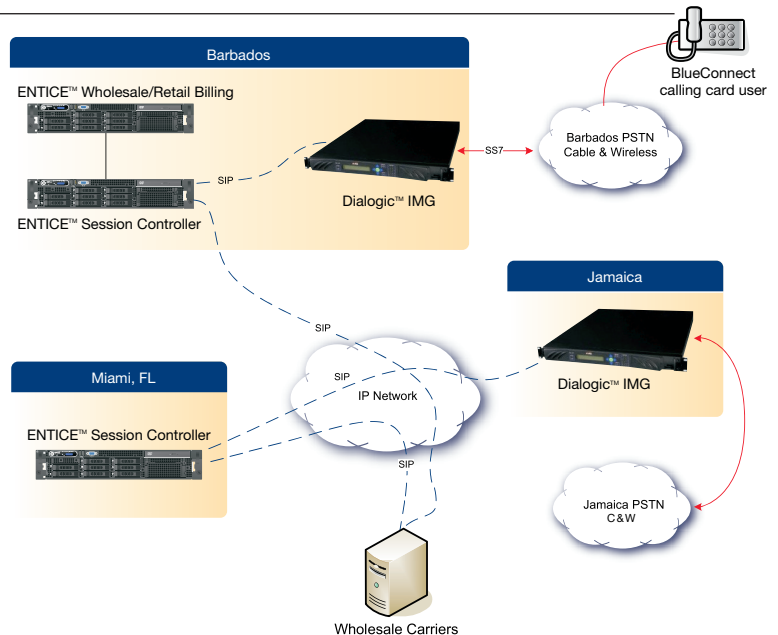
The ENTICE E-REV platform in Miami provides interconnection to competitive carriers in the Caribbean region offering direct TDM/MOBILE connection. Further expansion into Jamaica will see the deployment of an IMG1010 as a part of the Caribbean expansion of Blue Communications. A Nortel Optical Multiservice Edge 6110 provides OC-3 fiber capacity for delivery of TDM services into the Barbados legacy wireline network and will also be deployed in Jamaica to provide the backend for the IMG1010. The elegance of this system is that the entire network is managed from a single point in Barbados but is deployed in such a way that the NOC does not represent a critical failure point.

Making
convergence
simple



People you
can count on
Solutions you
can trust

ENTICE BlueCommunications Network



Why Stratus

For Blue, the ENTICE E-REV solution stood above competitive solutions in three critical areas:

- **Easy setup and deployment:** Network elements are extremely simple to install, configure, and deploy using the ENTICE E-REV platform.
- **Powerful, flexible operation and management:** Robust web-based user and application interfaces streamline call control and make it easy to set up advanced features.
- **High value:** The ENTICE E-REV solution provides a complete bundle of network elements and features at an affordable cost.

Each ENTICE E-REV platform includes an IP Multimedia Subsystem (IMS) -ready, scalable, distributed clustering architecture, and all components necessary for end-to-end IP-based service delivery across any IP based network topology, including wireline, VoIP, mobile (GSM or CDMA), and IMS. ENTICE E-REV platforms provide full access to pre-existing supplementary services via SIP or SS7. In addition, every ENTICE E-REV solution includes an application server, integrated session border controller, and systems for billing, unified messaging, and endpoint provisioning; plus a full set of web-based administration and customer portals to simplify management.

Blue was particularly attracted by the ENTICE E-REV platform's billing capabilities, which have enabled the company to start its highly successful Blue Connect calling card services. "It's allowed us to launch a cost-effective, customer friendly retail business, which has helped us succeed and grow in a competitive market," Sachar noted.

Additional capabilities, including the platform's easy setup, also impressed Blue. After an initial learning period, system integrators were able to implement the ENTICE E-REV platforms in approximately one week, in contrast to competitive solutions that can take months to install and configure. The ENTICE E-REV solution also features a Java and C++ -based interface that Blue has leveraged to create a custom reporting application. This has allowed the company to closely monitor call quality and more rapidly make system-level changes that improve service.

Success in Barbados

Sachar said he has been extremely happy with the decision to choose the Stratus Telecom solution. **"The system has operated without incident and when we've had issues, we've been given superb service," he said. "Stratus Telecom goes the extra mile."**

Blue has succeeded by charging less for interconnect and outbound calling services than Cable & Wireless. Currently the company processes approximately 25 percent of all calls into Barbados. Its Blue Connect

calling card also has been a hit with many of the estimated 1 million tourists who can avoid paying high roaming charges by purchasing cards at one of 250 stores or vending machines throughout the island. Business callers also take advantage of low cost calling using the Blue Select calling service.

"We couldn't have succeeded without Stratus Telecom," Sachar said, noting that business has grown so much that Blue plans to purchase additional ENTICE E-REV capacity to process the increasing number of calls.

Looking Ahead

The ENTICE E-REV solution includes a host of capabilities that Blue plans to utilize in the near future. For example, the company plans to leverage ENTICE E-REV's advanced capabilities to provide traditional Class 5 features such as call forwarding and call waiting, as well as services such as unified messaging, video calling, mobile VoIP service, and find-me-follow-me functionality to residential and business callers. The company also plans to offer full enterprise class VoIP and PBX services as soon as it receives approval from their regulator.

The ENTICE E-REV solution's modular, highly scalable architecture also is making it easy for Blue to expand to Jamaica and beyond. Following a service launch in Jamaica in 2009, the company plans to conquer new Caribbean markets, Sachar said. "One switch will control calls to Jamaica as well as a number of other islands," he said. "All you have to do is install a TDM switch in a data center and add some bandwidth and a router. That's it."

Additionally, Blue plans to take advantage of the ENTICE E-REV platform's partitioning capability. This will allow the company to host end-to-end VoIP services for new providers who have not grown large enough to host their own services.

"We believe that the ENTICE E-REV solution provides the fundamental building blocks we need to deliver high quality service to our customers," Sachar said. "And we're confident that the solution's advanced features, modularity, and easy scalability will serve us extremely well as our business evolves."

About Stratus Telecommunications

Stratus Telecommunications is a provider of complete VoIP and converged service solutions for telecommunications service providers. By helping its customers connect their world using trusted, innovative solutions and backing it with people they can count on, Stratus Telecom is making convergence simple. Stratus Telecom's solutions are installed in hundreds of service providers' networks including 14 of 20 of the world's largest carriers.

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