

CALL AHEAD

CALLPLUS LEVERAGES CISCO IP TELEPHONY TO OFFER A FULL SUITE OF SERVICES FOR SMALL TO MEDIUM SIZED BUSINESSES



CALLPLUS IS THE THIRD LARGEST TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY IN NEW ZEALAND WITH OFFICES LOCATED IN AUCKLAND AND HAMILTON, AS WELL AS CHANNEL OUTLETS IN WELLINGTON.

It employs more than 80 staff servicing some 50,000 customers.

Established in 1996 by Managing Director Malcolm Dick, CallPlus was a pioneer of free Internet services and cost effective toll calls for its customers, rapidly expanding its offerings to include value-added services such as online billing and reporting, managed firewall security, content filtering and Internet over high speed Ethernet.

Today CallPlus operates as a fully independent toll carrier providing its customers with access to a world-class international network with high quality, instant toll services at low per-minute rates. CallPlus customers also benefit from the full range of Internet, data, voice, mobile and fixed line calling.

THE CHALLENGE

IN 1998, CONCERNED TO PROVIDE THEIR GROWING CUSTOMER BASE WITH THE BEST POSSIBLE RANGE OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, CALLPLUS BEGAN TO INVESTIGATE THE POTENTIAL OF OFFERING IP TELEPHONY TO ALL OF THEIR CUSTOMERS.

What they envisioned was a full range of services provided using a radical centralised common architecture that was accessible and affordable for all – small, medium and large enterprises.

Stephen Phillips, Chief Technology Officer at CallPlus, comments: "Right from the start, CallPlus intended to push technology boundaries and open doors for small to medium size businesses who were left behind by big business telecommunications companies who were not interested in the 'little' fish."

CallPlus also saw that the number of vendors any one business had to deal with to provide communication services to a company was an issue.

For any business, small, medium or large, a raft of vendors could be involved in the telecommunications environment including the network provider, an ISP, hardware provider, security consultants, and software vendors. Each vendor would be required to make changes to communications systems if change occurred within the business. As well as being difficult from a productivity perspective, CallPlus determined that the traditional approach to telecommunications service was making cost control difficult, as no company could accurately audit cost across multiple suppliers and volumes of paper-based billing.

THIS IS THE POWER OF THE NETWORK. **now.**



THE SOLUTION

THE SOLUTION HAS EVOLVED OUT OF FOUR YEARS OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSIVE TRIALING BY CALLPLUS, WHO TOOK THE CISCO IP TECHNOLOGY AND WRAPPED IT WITH A CLUSTER OF INNOVATIVE SOFTWARE TOOLS.

This suite of products, known as Commverge, enables the entire telecommunications platform to be integrated under one provider.

Stephen Phillips comments: "We're pretty much Cisco exclusive, having integrated a complete IP solution from the ground up. Because of our chosen technology path, using the Cisco solution has enabled us to pass on competitive pricing to our clients as well as providing state-of-the-art technology for companies wishing to grow their business without the expense of new technology upgrades."

CallPlus now deliver IP telephony solutions to businesses in a cost-effective manner. Whereas IP has traditionally been the preserve of large corporates that can justify the cost of multiple gateways, the CallPlus solution (CallManager, software, hardware and other software enhancements) allows any business to take advantage of productivity gains delivered through the new technologies. This is achieved by running a public IP network that incorporates the major technology requirements within the network.

The network is delivered via large bandwidth pipes into buildings around central Auckland, Wellington and Hamilton. Currently over sixty buildings have been cabled to the IP network, and any business within these buildings has instant access to the world of IP telephony. All that is required is a switch to link them to the network and then a business with as little as one phone connection can be using the speed, productivity and cost enhancements.

Key elements to the system include the Unified Messaging solution that CallPlus have developed to integrate with the Cisco IP Telephony platform. This provides a single platform, which incorporates all forms of communication; voicemail, e-mail, faxes. The user can access this information from their phone or desktop computer; they can have messages diverted to their cellphone – responding to emails with voice attachments – or they can log onto the system from any browser around the world and effectively work as if from their own office desk. This functionality has the ability to improve employee productivity significantly.

"COMMVERGE DELIVERS FLEXIBLE AND MANAGEABLE TELEPHONY, FACSIMILE, EMAIL, INTERNET, APPLICATION AND CONNECTIVITY SERVICES SUITABLE FOR SOLE TRADERS RIGHT THROUGH TO GLOBAL BUSINESSES. AND IT DELIVERS IT ALL IN A SINGLE PACKAGE, OVER A SINGLE CABLE, WITHOUT SACRIFICING QUALITY OR SECURITY,"

STEPHEN PHILLIPS, CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER AT CALLPLUS

One DDI number is assigned to each user and that number either 'follows' the phone, or it can be assigned to multiple phones allowing the user to work from more than one office – very useful for those who like to maintain a home office environment. Should the user need to move to a new location, they simply take the phone and plug it into a new socket, there is no longer a need to call in the phone company to re-patch a switchboard.

THE RESULT

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR COST SAVING IS HUGE, ON SEVERAL FRONTS. BY USING ONE INTEGRATED SUPPLIER WHO HAS CREATED AN ON-LINE, REAL-TIME BILLING SYSTEM, COMPANIES ARE ABLE TO GAIN ACCURATE INFORMATION ON HOW THEIR COMMUNICATIONS BUDGET IS BEING SPENT.

Calls can be accurately monitored and costs controlled. Frequently called numbers can be grouped and discrepancy items identified, thus improving both cost and productivity control. Calling through the IP environment reduces the cost of calls and Internet access considerably.

As this system is IP telephony, it also provides options for adding extra software to extend capability, such as the ability for a law firm to track billable hours simply by providing access to support software on the phone system; legal staff punch a couple of keys and billing is automatically initiated.

The final benefit is the scalability and flexibility of these new systems. CallPlus have already shown through their own experience and those of their clients, that these new platforms can easily be scaled to accommodate changing business requirements – it is as simple as plugging a new phone into the wall.

And with the size of the pipes going into each client (1 GBps in most cases), the scalability is immense. When asked by one client if they would be able to extend beyond the current 30 extensions, staff at CallPlus did some calculations and determined that the client would be able to add 43,000 extensions.

“USING THE CISCO SOLUTION HAS ENABLED US TO PASS ON COMPETITIVE PRICING TO OUR CLIENTS AS WELL AS PROVIDING STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY FOR COMPANIES WISHING TO GROW THEIR BUSINESS WITHOUT THE EXPENSE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES.”

STEPHEN PHILLIPS, CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, CALLPLUS



THE PARTNERSHIPS

WHEN LEVERAGING THE POTENTIAL OF IP TELEPHONY AS THE CENTREPIECE OF AN INNOVATIVE BUSINESS STRATEGY, SUCH AS THAT DEVELOPED BY CALLPLUS, IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE STRONG RELIABLE PARTNERS WITH A PROVEN TRACK RECORD AND A COMMITMENT TO TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION.

With Cisco Systems, CallPlus had the confidence to move forward and implement their strategy successfully.

Stephen Phillips comments: "If you want to provide a quality service, you need the right infrastructure. With Cisco's Architecture for Video Voice and Integrated Data (AVVID), CallPlus has the foundation we need to propel businesses into the telecommunications future."



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