Customer Case Study

Italian Telecommunications Services Provider Gets a Welcome Benefit From Cisco Systems and Personeta

Welcome Italia is an Italian telecommunications operator that provides a broad range of services, predominantly to the small-to-medium enterprise (SME) sector. It operates in a competitive environment and was keen to increase its penetration a specific market niche: the provision of pre-paid long-distance calls for international phone center outlets.

Together with local system integrator Gruppo In.I.T., Cisco Systems(r) and Personeta were able to provide phone center services on a platform, based on the Cisco Service Exchange Framework (SEF), which made it easier and more cost effective for the operator and its customers to manage services and create new ones.

The result has been that the company has been able to increase its revenues through the improved delivery of phone center services, the rapid and simple deployment of new applications and lower cost of operations as a result of having a single platform for all service delivery.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome Italia

- **Industry**, Telecommunications services provider

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Offer pre-paid phone center packages flexibly and easily.
- Find a cost-effective alternative to traditional time-division multiplexing (TDM) infrastructures.
- Capture new opportunities in areas such as premium-rate services delivery.

NETWORK SOLUTION

- Cisco PGW2200 together with the Cisco AS5350 as the public switched telephone network/public land mobile network gateway.
- Personeta TappS network service controller as the application server to create network services.

BUSINESS VALUE

- Enhanced revenues.
- Ability to modify services quickly and create new ones.
- Potential to tailor services for third-party content providers.
- Ability to leverage existing investment with additional services.
- Potential to add additional services such as premium video or hosted private branch exchange.

THE CHALLENGE

Welcome Italia, an established Italian telecommunications services provider with a diverse service offering, had been providing traditional private branch exchange (PBX) services to SMEs and wanted to cost-effectively broaden its portfolio while migrating its PBX services to a hosted model. Specifically, the company was keen to create a phone center service that would allow small phone shops to offer pre-paid long-distance calls, and potentially use the same platform for the delivery of other applications such as premium rate one number services.

The Cisco PGW 2200 Softswitch, together with the Cisco AS5350 Universal Gateway is the core platform that Welcome Italia is using to perform essential call-control tasks such as digit analysis, routing and circuit selection. The PGW 2200 and AS5350's support for industry-standard control protocols, particularly Session Initiation Protocol (SIP), gives the company the capability to seamlessly route voice and data calls between the public switched telephone network (PSTN) and packet networks.

THE SOLUTION

Welcome Italia engaged the Italian systems integrator Gruppo In.I.T., a Cisco Premier Select Partner, to create the technology foundation for its phone center service.

Previously, Cisco had introduced In.I.T. to the Cisco SEF application partner Personeta, a software company that provides a carrier-grade platform for service creation and delivery of converged voice and multimedia services over multiple network types. Its main product is a complete network service control (NSC) system that allows service providers to rapidly deploy new services, ranging from mobile office applications in the business sector to pre-paid broadband and video telephony. The platform, TappS (for Telco application Server) NSC, also enables third parties, including the service provider, to create services. It can be used to offer a virtually unlimited number of different services to a virtually unlimited number of users.

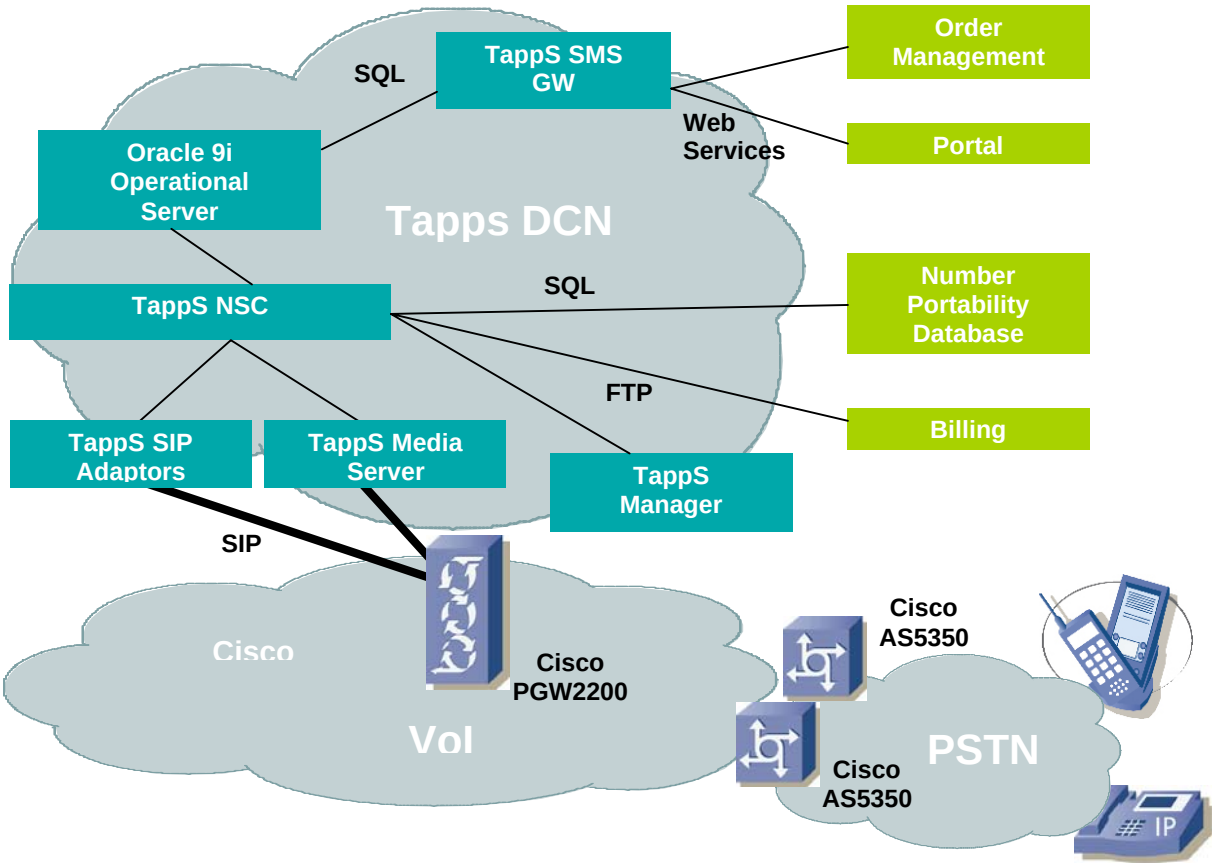
In.I.T. realized that Welcome Italia would need Cisco PGW 2200 Softswitches for call control, together with the Cisco 5350 Universal Gateway and its recommendation was for the telecommunications service provider to deploy TappS for service delivery on top of the Cisco PGW 2200 Softswitches. The Cisco network components employ voice over IP (VoIP), using SIP.

The next-generation network nature of the platform avoids revenue losses that might have been incurred in using traditional, closed and inflexible technologies. It offers Web provisioning and customer self-care to improve the cost-effectiveness of operations, along with real-time statistics and a complete view of the network status. It is scalable, user-friendly and efficient, and supports Welcome Italia's dynamic and growing business.

The familiarity that In.I.T. had with the Personeta and Cisco technologies resulted in an extremely rapid roll out for Welcome Italia. After Welcome Italia had bought into the business case that In.I.T. had developed, the equipment was purchased in February and March of 2005 and installed in July and August.

In addition to prepaid phone center applications, the system allows Welcome Italia to capitalize on other potential revenue-generating ventures, such as the provision of premium-rate one-number services.

Figure 1. Welcome Italia - prepaid phone center services



BUSINESS VALUE

In a dynamic and competitive market, Welcome Italia has been able to dramatically increase its revenues and gain market share thanks to its use of TappS supported by Cisco PGW 2200 Softswitches and Cisco 5350 Universal Gateway. Welcome Italia has been able to benefit from the fact that the TappS and PGW Softswitch combination effectively straddles the gap between the traditional and next-generation network worlds.

Taking advantage of a vast Signaling System 7 (SS7) protocol library and supporting industry-standard control protocols, including Media Gateway Control Protocol, H.323 and SIP, the PGW 2200 provides service providers with the capability to seamlessly route voice and data calls between PSTN and packet networks. TappS, meanwhile, although designed as an IP Multimedia Subsystem (IMS) generic application server, can work equally on non-IP, non-IMS infrastructures such as PSTNs and public land mobile networks, for example as an intelligent network service control point, and in hybrid environments, helping integrate multiple environments and providing a smooth migration to IMS and next-generation networks. This ability to encompass both IMS and non-IMS infrastructures is built as a generic foundation within all elements of the Cisco SEF. TappS also supports all major signaling protocols, which means it can connect different data networks in order to support applications such as 'click to dial' services.

These services can be offered without TappS NSC, of course, but to do so traditionally would require the creation of vertical service silos and the duplication of services and service management across different networks, with a consequent impact on efficiency and cost. Another option for operators is to go to one of the industry's major technology vendors and get them to link the Service Control Point (SCP) and SIP systems together. This, though, would still not deliver the same level of functionality as TappS NSC and would be very costly. The beauty of TappS NSC is that it allows service providers to offer their customers advanced services and applications on a single platform now, regardless of their state of migration from traditional to IP network architectures. Furthermore, the way TappS NSC is sold to customers provides a very rapid return on investment, virtually to the point that the operator pays for it out of the incremental revenues that it yields.

Both the PGW 2200 together with the AS5350 and TappS are highly scalable platforms and so will be able to support the company's growth well into the foreseeable future, giving Welcome Italia solid investment protection.

Last but not least, the combination of Cisco Softswitches, Cisco Universal Gateways and TappS gives Welcome Italia a robust and flexible foundation on which to create and roll out new services. Apart from the fact that TappS already comes with a number of available service options and two types of service creation interface, In.I.T. has a software development kit for the NSC system that has allowed it to develop services such as mobile number portability without having to call upon Personeta. This means that Welcome Italia will be well placed to respond rapidly to new opportunities or changing market or regulatory conditions.

CONCLUSION

Welcome Italia operates in a competitive market in which service efficiency and flexibility are critical ingredients for success. Thanks to its use of Cisco PGW 2200 Softswitch, Cisco AS5350 Universal Gateway, and Cisco SEF application partner Personeta's TappS technology, it has been able to increase its revenues significantly, firstly by maximizing the effectiveness of its service delivery and secondly by avoiding the costs associated with TDM network architectures. It has also gained a significant competitive advantage in adopting a system that can be used to roll out new services easily and quickly, and furthermore one which offers all the scalability the company may need in order to capitalize on its success.

ABOUT PERSONETA

Personeta is a leading provider of Intelligent Network Service Creation and IMS application server platforms that enable carriers to improve profitability with value-added voice, data and video services. Personeta's TappS server is a NSC network service controller which combines proven IMS application server technology and service resource control to deliver next-generation services over both legacy intelligent networks and next-generation infrastructures. It also delivers the same services over any combination of network technologies - fixed, mobile, VoIP and broadband. Additional information about Personeta can be found at http://www.personeta.com/

ABOUT GRUPPO IN.I.T.

In.I.T. has several years' experience in system integration and software development. IN.I.T. implements and supports Cisco Systems service provider technologies such as the Cisco PGW2200, Cisco AS5350, and Proxy SIP Server. IN.I.T.'s application platform, named INFInIT and based on Personeta TappS core technology, provides NGN services and is certified as a part of the Cisco Systems IMS architecture for service providers.

Additional information about Gruppo IN.I.T. can be found at http://www.gruppoinit.it

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