



Introduction

Octel was one of the most successful makers of voicemail systems through the 1980s and 1990s. First as a stand-alone company and then as a division of Lucent/Avaya from 1997 onward, Octel built an extremely large user base of customers for their Aria and Serenade products.

When Avaya acquired Octel, Avaya combined Octel with the Avaya Audix business and continued selling the Octel product line. Since acquiring Octel, Avaya has been utilizing the Octel user base as a source of customers for newer message platforms such as Avaya Modular Messaging and other Avaya Unified Communications products.

Opportunity

Despite Avaya's strategy, many Octel customers have defected from Avaya to other vendors and products, including the Cisco Unity® solution. Proactively approaching Octel customers with a Cisco Unity offer can yield incremental sales and drive Cisco's growth in unified communications.

There is currently a short-term opportunity to address the Octel customer base. In mid-2007, Avaya ended the expansion of Octel products. As a result, customers are unable to add new users to their existing Octel systems. Even Octel customers who have enough user licenses will be facing total end of support over the next few years (Table 1).

Table 1. Timeline for Remaining Support for Octel Products

	End of Sale	End of Expansions	End of Support
Octel 100	12/31/2003	7/26/2004	7/1/2005
Octel 200/300	6/30/2006	6/30/2007	6/30/2011
Octel 250/350	6/30/2006	6/30/2007	6/30/2011
Definity Audix	3/31/2003	NA	3/31/2008
Intuity Audix	6/30/2006	6/30/2007	6/30/2011
Unified Messenger	4/4/2005	4/4/2006	4/4/2010

Source of info for the table is Octel product announcements and press releases available [here](#).

Cisco Unity: Flexible Platform

When approaching Octel customers facing end of support, it is important to communicate that Cisco Unity can provide a smooth migration from the Octel solution to a new messaging solution.

The first thing to emphasize to customers that are not ready to fully deploy Cisco IP telephony is that Cisco Unity can integrate with their current PBX using inexpensive gateway appliances that Cisco both sells and supports. Using these PBX IP Media Gateway and T1/E1 IP Media Gateway (PIMG/TIMG) appliances, customers can gradually replace their end-of-life Octel systems without needing to replace the system all at once. The PIMG uses the same connection the customer is already using to integrate with their Octel system, minimizing disruption and the need for reconfiguration. Customers can immediately get the benefits of Cisco Unity and prepare themselves for future unified communications benefits without undertaking any additional upfront investment.

The next thing to communicate is that customers that migrate from Octel to Cisco Unity can use Octel Voice Networking with Cisco Unity as an integration solution without losing any functionality. During the migration, both Cisco Unity and Octel users will be able to address and send messages to each other across a single network. This is accomplished through Octelnet. Customers can begin a Cisco Unity deployment using Cisco Unity to meet their immediate need to add new users, then progressively move existing users to the Cisco Unity system until the migration is complete (but before the end of support in 2011 for the majority of Octel platforms). Thus, Cisco Unity gives customers the ability to meet both short-term and long-term needs.

Finally, a common concern is user retraining. Administrators are often concerned about changes from the familiar Octel Telephone User Interface (TUI). Cisco Unity emulates the TUI of all the Octel systems, eliminat-

ing this problem. Furthermore, Cisco Unity layers speech on top of the TUI, allowing users to press or say an option in the user menu. Cisco Unity offers users the Octel TUI they know while letting them operate hands-free.

Cisco Unity: Anytime, Anywhere Collaboration

While the first thing to do is to assure the customer that Cisco Unity will not be disruptive to the productivity of an organization that is already comfortable with their existing Octel system, it is important to make sure the customer understands that Cisco Unity offers substantial incremental value over their legacy Octel equipment. Octel systems were designed for an era before unified communications, smartphones, and instant messaging; even e-mail and mobile phones were nowhere near as pervasive as they are today. Cisco Unity is designed for today's workplace and helps people collaborate more effectively and more quickly.

Cisco Unity users can access messages through common clients such as Microsoft Outlook, Lotus Notes, and Blackberries, receiving and responding to messages more quickly and enhancing productivity. And working in conjunction with Cisco Unified Communications applications such as Cisco Unified Personal Communicator, Cisco Unity offers messages in a unified client that combines voicemail, soft phone capabilities, presence, and instant messaging.

For mobile users, Cisco Unity offers rich integration with the RIM Blackberry and capabilities such as interrupted session recovery and speech access, allowing mobile users on unreliable mobile phone networks to quickly access their messages, even hands-free. Cisco Unity also offers integration with Cisco Unified Mobile Communicator, a rich application that works on many phones. In short, Cisco Unity features help former Octel users become even more effective.



Octel Customers: Future Cisco Unity Customers

Objection Handling

I'm concerned about putting my voice messages into an e-mail environment (Exchange, Domino) or accessing them from computer clients. How do I keep them from becoming discoverable or being forwarded outside my organization? Octel didn't have these problems.

One solution is to configure Cisco Unity as a voicemail-only system. However, Cisco Unity also offers secure messaging that encrypts voice messages so that only the recipient or only users within the organization can listen to the message. The encryption also allows for expiration of the message, even if it is saved to a hard drive, thus enforcing retention policies. Only Cisco Unity offers encrypted messaging to protect your organization.

I used the fax capabilities of my Octel system. Can Cisco Unity match them?

Cisco Unity can be deployed with the Cisco Fax System, a Cisco Unity add-on. With this add-on, Cisco Unity exceeds the capabilities of the Octel fax solution.

I rely heavily on the notification capabilities of Octel products to telephones, pagers, etc. Can Cisco Unity do this?

Yes. Through Cisco Personal Communications Assistant, a built-in capability of Cisco Unity, users can custom-configure all these notifications using a Web-based interface. Cisco Unity also provides message notifications via SMTP or SMS, which are not supported by Octel.

My Octel system is highly reliable. I've never had a problem with it. Can Cisco Unity match its reliability?

Cisco Unity has been on the market for more than 10 years and has a record of reliability, even in large deployments. The ability to work in Unity Message Repository mode helps ensure continued operation even if the message store is lost. Cisco Unity can even exceed what Octel systems are capable of achieving. With failover and standby redundancy features, Cisco Unity handles hardware failures and site-level disasters that would have caused a failure of an Octel system.

The competitive information contained in this document was obtained through publicly available sources and was accurate as of October 2007.