



CONSULTEGE HELPS AMERICAN CITY BUSINESS JOURNAL CUT COSTS ACROSS 41 LOCATIONS

Every week, four million people turn to **American City Business Journals' (ACBJ)** 41 metropolitan publications for news about their business communities. With each publication focused on the issues of a specific community, readers are assured of relevant information with editorial quality. Over the past several years, the publications that serve communities from Honolulu to Boston have received hundreds of local, regional and national awards in categories ranging from local news reporting to investigative and industry-specific coverage.

While each publication focused on its local community and readers, the corporate headquarters in Charlotte, NC was faced with 41 separate telecommunications systems. Explained Jane Dacquisto, ACBJ's Telecommunications and Systems Specialist, "The costs of so many independent systems were very high, not only in per-call charges but also in the time required for local personnel to deal with system maintenance and management."



Dacquisto knew she could utilize a single system that linked the company's 41 separate publishing offices with corporate headquarters, but ACBJ was cautious about Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology. "The technology was quite new," she said. "We wanted to give it a chance to prove itself before we took on such a substantial commitment." By 2005, ACBJ was

confident in the VoIP technology. Equally important, according to Dacquisto, "We were confident that Consultedge would help us to reach our goal of a single, unified communication system."

The Bottom Line of Cutting Costs

Consultedge partnered with ACBJ, creating a three year plan to connect 2,500 users at 41 separate locations into a single cohesive system. The system design was built on the company's existing WAN system, which had been underutilized, to produce immediate cost savings. The three year strategy enables the phased integration of individual operations, with one office scheduled for cutover per month. By the end of 2006, thirty facilities had been linked into the enterprise-wide system.

Consultedge's communications solution incorporates the following technology and service elements:

- Avaya S8700 Media Server uses a Linux platform on an Intel-based server to ensure high-reliability digital and IP communications (99.999%).

- Avaya Communication Manager (CM) software provides a standards-based platform that ensures cost-effective scalability and the integration of future telephony applications from any technology vendor in the future.
- Avaya Modular Messaging is a powerful voice and fax messaging platform that enables 24/7 access to messages from fax, telephone and PC. The system allows 4-digit calling throughout the enterprise, minimizing long distance per-call charges, and creates a unified voice mail format to replace the previous site-specific voice mail systems.
- Maintenance is provided by Consultedge through a long term contract for enterprise-wide service, ensuring that all systems operate as designed to deliver optimal efficiency and performance.
- Deployment for each site is overseen onsite by Consultedge's PMI-certified Project Manager for all aspects of system implementation including cutover, testing, startup and training. Systems are staged in Charlotte before being sent onsite for cutover.

Tracking Results

With the final 12 facilities scheduled for cutover in 2007, ACBJ's goal of an integrated system is approaching completion, but already the benefits have become evident. "The company has already seen substantial cost savings from the large reduction of per-call charges," explained Dacquisto. The personnel in ACBJ's far-flung enterprises are also making their approval known, according to Dacquisto. "The offsite people love the system because it eliminates the need for them to maintain and manage the system. Before, if they needed another phone extension, they had to call someone to do the job. It was costly and time consuming. That has all changed. Now, they simply place a call to our administrative office, where we use just a few keystrokes to create a new extension. It's proving to be a very good solution for us."



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