



## **James Communications centralizes customer service with Quintum Tenor VoIP MultiPath Switch**

### ***National cable operator slashes toll-free phone charges with WAN “backhaul”***

Improvements in customer service and customer relationship management continue to occupy a top spot in most organizations' lists of IT objectives. That's why CRM applications, online self-service and other related technologies continue to show strong growth despite a lukewarm economy.

But, ultimately, customer relationships depend on conversations between customers and company service reps. And, for Bloomfield, Michigan-based cable operator James Communications, VoIP plays a key role in making sure those conversations are both reliable and inexpensive.

#### **The challenge**

James Communications has grown through acquisition, so the company wound up with a wide assortment of incompatible PBX platforms from Lucent, Nortel and Toshiba in its seven main offices, which are located in seven different states. Calls between those offices were costing the company \$4000 per month.

Just as importantly, because customers from all those different states were calling James' centralized call center, the company was spending about \$8000 per month for its toll-free support line.


To upgrade its voice infrastructure, the company implemented a 3Com MBX IP PBX. The 3Com IP PBX gave James a common voice platform across all its offices.

Unfortunately, the 3Com system required an expensive H.323 server at each location. “Not only would we have had to purchase a fairly big server for each office, we would have also had to put up with all the headaches that go with managing a PC,” says Mann.

#### **The solution**

Mann's solution was to implement Quintum's Tenor VoIP MultiPath Switch, which complemented the 3Com system with full H.323 functionality in a stable, easy-to-manage package. “The Tenor switch offered us the H.323 capabilities with much less cost and hassle than we would have had with a PC-based product,” says Mann.

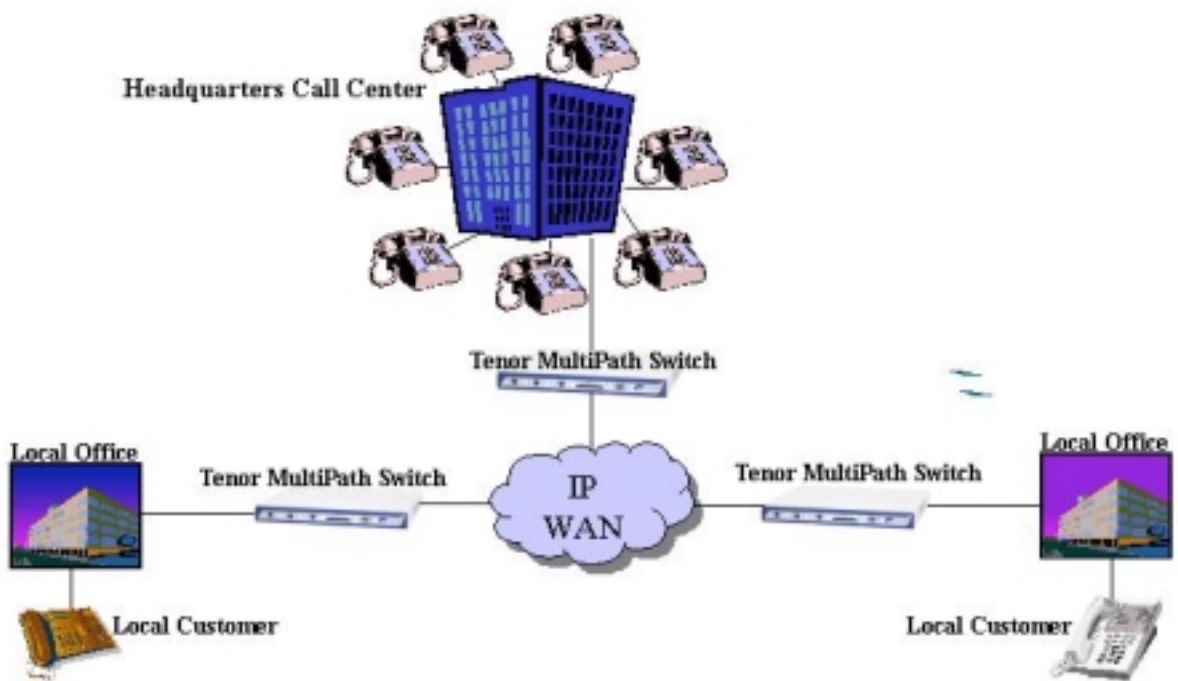
With the Tenor Switches in place, Mann was able to route office-to-office calls over the company's VPN, which runs over tier 1 ISP UUnet's IP network.



But Mann gained much more than H.323 functionality from his deployment of the Tenors. Because of the Tenor's SelectNet™ technology, Mann doesn't have to worry about problems on the VPN interrupting intra-company voice services. If VPN performance issues threaten the quality of voice calls, the Tenor automatically simply re-routes the company's voice traffic over the PSTN. "Our VPN is actually very reliable," says Mann. "But it's good to know that if there were a problem, we wouldn't lose the ability to communicate."

James gets another big savings bonus from its Tenor deployment. Now, instead of having to foot bigger and bigger 800-number bills every month, the company can have its customers call their local offices for support. Those calls can then be transparently "backhauled" via the Tenor Switches over the company's IP VPN. The result: customer support operations can be efficiently centralized at the company's headquarters without incurring inordinate phone costs.

"It's great to be able to leverage our VPN as a voice network," says Mann. "The savings, simplicity and flexibility we gain from our architecture are all very valuable to our business."



James Communications' VoIP system allowed the company to centralize its nationwide Call center without shouldering high toll free number costs.



## VoIP success

In addition to the Tenor's reliability, Mann is enthusiastic about its ease of implementation. "It's very easy to tell it which calls should go where," he says. "That simplicity is particularly important for a company of our size that doesn't have a large technical staff and can't spend a lot of time building expertise in a bunch of complex systems."

Mann's long-term vision for the company is to take even greater advantage of the location-transparency that intra-company VoIP provides in order to "virtually centralize" other business functions. "Once you eliminate office-to-office calling as a cost barrier, you can be more aggressive about consolidating company-wide services at any location," he notes.

James Communications is proof-positive that VoIP is already delivering tangible benefits to companies with mainstream voice service requirements. James also serves as a prime example of the fact that you don't have to be a huge company with a huge budget to be a technology innovator. "This stuff is actually very practical and easy to deploy," says Mann. "I'm sure there are a lot of businesses that could benefit from IP-based voice and Quintum's VoIP switching solution."

Case Study written with the assistance and approval of Mr. Charles Mann, James Communications.

