Gateway Group
Creating Profitable Technology Strategies Since 1990

Telephone and Converged Communications Systems

Quick Survey

An affordable way for you to find out if your organization can benefit from the Communications Systems Revolution that's reducing overhead costs and enabling major business process improvements for thousands of organizations world-wide.

For most businesses and organizations, communications efficiency directly impacts business results and bottom line profitability since nearly every employee communicates with other employees, customers, suppliers and partners several times a day. In today's highly competitive environment where many business efficiencies have already been realized, improvements in communications processes and costs may now be the best opportunity for improving corporate competitiveness and strengthening the bottom line.

A rapid change in telecom products and systems has been occurring that will continue to significantly impact how we communicate and work.

The office phone is quickly merging with the PC to provide seamless, unified voice, e-mail, fax, and video and document collaboration. Mobility options keep employees in touch and allow them to work wherever they are most productive. Open systems are creating more telecom competition and choices for organizations. Voice, video and data are being shared on single corporate networks, producing significant cost reductions.

Products and systems powering the revolution:

- **VoIP phones and connections** – Voice traffic moves over data networks. Open system solutions increase competitiveness and options and reduce costs. VoIP can make it possible for employees and contractors to work from anywhere in the world.
- **Instant Messaging** – Better than voice or e-mail for quick communications: preferred communications method for the "Twenty Somethings".
- **Unified Messaging** – email, voice mail and fax in the same place, desktop or mobile: can save significant communications time and reduce storage costs.
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- **ACD** – Automated Call Director, call centers, centralized and distributed: a structured and highly manageable way to route and handle calls within an organization.
- **Collaboration** – Team brainstorming, design and document development meetings via the Web: speeds program and product development, reduces costs and errors.

- **Desktop video**. – Supports collaboration, team building training, security systems, and situation analysis.
- **Interactive Voice Response Systems** –Delivers information, takes orders and processes data via phone 7/24 without staffing.
- **WiFi networks** – Computer, phone, PDA and camera mobility within an enterprise: eliminates the phone and network cord.
- **WiFi phones** – Powerful cordless desk phone in your pocket.
- **Broadband Internet over cell phone** – Multi-media personal device. Voice, IM, pictures, documents, and music in one device.
- **PDA** / **Pocket PC** –Documents, presentations, databases, pictures, brochures, email, Web browser, phone, books, directories, dictionary, maps and more in your pocket. With a wireless connection, information and communications is always available.
- **Remote Teleworker** capability. Employees and contractors can work seamlessly from anywhere in the world.
- **Skype** – setting new expectations for the quality of voice communications world-wide.
- **Carrier competition** – The competition started by the break-up of the old AT&T continues to create significant solution and pricing options.
- **Phones of different form factor**: Soft phones on the computer requiring only a headset. Phones that fit between the keyboard and monitor, phones with qwerty keyboards.
- **Integrated, hosted solutions**. – Data, voice and security for small offices and branches delivered by a single provider over a single connection. Rapid and easy deployment, low costs, easy to manage.

The Gateway Group Communications System Quick Survey

The Gateway Group Quick Survey is a quick and affordable way for your organization to get a knowledgeable and objective analysis of the potential impact of the new communications technologies on your business. It produces a high-level but relevant assessment of your current communications technology and costs relative to what the latest technology can deliver.

We begin by interviewing senior management to understand your strategic business objectives and challenges to assure that we focus our attention on things that support your organization's goals.

We will then interview several key departments. The interviews include an education component. Once we have a basic understanding of a department's functions, we will ask questions related to the strengths and weaknesses of the present phone and communications systems. We then provide succinct operational descriptions of technology that might be applicable to that group's mission and operation and discuss if and how that technology might help them be more productive.

We will also review your telecommunications contracts to identify potential opportunities for cost savings, which may be significant.

We will review your current IT network with your IT director to get a general idea of your network's readiness to carry voice traffic.

The Quick Study deliverable is a high-level analysis and recommendations report that is presented to your management team. It will provide a high level situational analysis with options and recommendations for discussion by your team with the Gateway Group consultant.

Possible Outcomes of the Quick Survey

The Quick Survey may reveal that your communications technology, costs and processes are appropriate for your business at this point in time. If so, we will give you a general timetable to review your carrier and service contracts and to begin looking at updating your phone system.

On the other hand, the survey may identify opportunities for business process improvement and/or cost savings. We may even find immediate opportunities to reduce your phone bills.

In some cases, particularly where a phone system may be near the end of its life cycle or is now under capacity, we may recommend a phone system upgrade with certain converged communications functions. In other cases, there may be opportunities to reduce costs or improve processes by implementing functions in stages such using VoIP between facilities to reduce phone costs and deliver four-digit dialing between facilities or adding modular voice or text communications functions such as Unified Messaging to improve communications efficiency, particularly for road-warriors.

The input:

Survey / Education
- Interviews with senior management and up to five departments
- IT network VoIP readiness (Interview with IT director)
- Review of phone contracts (CFO or designated person)
- Review of present phone system and phones.

The Output:

Report and Presentation
- Executive overview of current technology
  - VoIP, Collaboration, WiFi networks, Teleworker, Unified Messaging, Distributed Call Centers, IVR
  - Typical applications and economic justifications
  - General pricing guidelines
  - General Trends
  - Key players
- A management level overview of survey findings and recommendations
  - Business Process and cost savings opportunities identified
  - General overview of your current communications systems
    - Carrier costs
    - Telephone system and phones
    - Utilization / under-utilization of your current system's capabilities
    - Review of service contract costs, value and options
  - Considerations for future planning
    - EOL prediction for current phone system
    - Interim purchases and upgrade recommendations.
    - Network upgrade recommendations for VoIP readiness
    - Contract negotiation timing and options with carriers

Cost

The cost for the Quick Survey for a company between 100 and 1000 employees is $5,000 plus travel expenses for locations over 100 miles from Detroit, Michigan. Please contact the Gateway Group for Quick Survey costs for smaller or larger organizations.

The Gateway Group

The Gateway Group is a technology strategy consulting partnership, begun in 1990. Our background is both technology and business management. Our sole income is from consulting revenue. We don't accept any income or favors from people or companies that sell products or services. We are judiciously solution agnostic. Our knowledge is current by virtue of our consulting practice which includes analysis, design, selection and implementation of major communications and distance learning systems, and by on-going education.

The Gateway Group consults with organizations to identify technology driven business opportunities, develop strategies and solutions, create acquisition and implementation plans, manage the acquisition process, including RFP development, proposal evaluation and contracting. We also assist with implementation management and vendor oversight.

If the Quick Survey identifies business process and/or cost savings opportunities, the Gateway Group can provide consulting services to clarify your requirements, potential solutions, budgets and ROI for one or more of the identified components. We can further assist you in the development of specific requirements specifications, an RFP and identify competent vendors to bid on your RFP.

Gateway Group client list includes; Allen County (IN) Public Libraries, Caribiner Communications, Coastal Wave Networks, Dialogue Marketing, Dow Corning, Ford Motor Company, Leading Way Corporation, Michigan Virtual University, NTN Communications, South Bend Clinics, University of Michigan, Visteon and Xperience Communications.

The Gateway Group is a member of the Society of Telecom Consultants, a selective professional organization that requires adherence to a strict code of ethics and provides a network of collaborating consultants with tremendous depth of knowledge and a wide geographical coverage.

The Gateway Group is also a member of The Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce.

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October, 2006