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Integrated Solution Server vs. a La Carte: What Does Your Future Look Like?

Unified Messaging. Video Conferencing. Remote Teleworking. These are the technologies that almost every diverse business has in their future, if they have not been deployed already. But there is a right and a wrong way to grow into new telecommunication capabilities; on one path there is a sprawling infrastructure with multiple servers that is complex and expensive to maintain. The other is a streamlined infrastructure that will not use any more physical servers than what you are probably already using. The difference lies in how you think about your network in the long term.

To demonstrate this difference, let's review the method many companies use to expand their telecommunications network today. Most businesses have an existing PBX phone system already in place. As they start to upgrade to VoIP technology, videoconferencing (H.323) and new voicemail systems, they start adding hardware. New servers are added, and then new analog cards and custom scripting is added so that the new and old servers can communicate. The result is usually a server network of 5-6 servers.

All of these servers need to be maintained. That means a dedicated IT staff to keep the complex network up and running. It also means a big electricity bill. And it means something else that many companies don't think of-heat. That many servers generate a significant amount of heat and must be kept in a precise temperature and humidity controlled area. This means even higher electricity bills.


There's a better way.

There's definitely a better way to look at expanding your network. It's known as an Integrated Solution Server. This type of platform integrates the latest communication formats (VoIP, H.323, SIP and TDM) into one cohesive unit. The result is that what took 5-6 servers can now be accomplished with 1 or 2 at the most.

With a drastically reduced physical infrastructure, you can now maintain your vital communications with as little as a single IT employee, maybe even a part-time employee (depending on the size of your company). Your electricity costs will be significantly less and you will not need nearly as much space or climate control to accommodate your servers. In fact, some of the new Integrated Solution Servers run cool enough that they do not even require cooling fans (these are the best products).

Productivity and Growth for the Future

The benefit of Integrated Solution Servers doesn't stop at cost. There is an inherent, dedicated functionality improvement gained by integrating disparate technologies into one box. Take the example of videoconferencing. Traditional videoconferencing is point-to-point. But by integrating H.323 into your telecommunications server, you can



network in multiple audio callers in different locations, just like a traditional conference call. After all, the H.323 endpoint is simply an extension on the communications server.

With an Integrated Solution Server, tying in remote users to your network is easy. With a platform that can connect to almost anything, you will not experience the technical burdens of the past, and you can get new offsite employees up and running quicker and enhance their mobility. This is just a sample of the productivity benefits that this type of architecture can offer.

But the real differentiator of an Integrated Solution Server network is its ability to grow with your business. No matter what type of communication applications you decide to add in the future, you will have a network that's ready for the change. This forward-looking capability is what your organization will need as these new technologies continue to improve and evolve.

When looking at different vendors to deploy this type of operating environment, just be sure it is truly an integrated solution. Many vendors will promise this functionality, but will deliver it through the traditional model of multiple servers and customized software. But there is no reason for this model anymore, as the days of the "server farm" are numbered.