

A FROST & SULLIVAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Convergence's Triple Threat: Network, Access, and Applications



in Collaboration with:



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Case Study: CORT®

Challenge:

The company's communication was based on a complex frame relay network. Data was not transferable from site to site without going through a head end, making it inefficient and frustrating.

Solution:

CORT pursued an MPLS solution five years ago with Sprint's MPLS/IPVPN system, plus Data LinkSM for access diversity, and recently added SIP Trunking onto the platform this year.

Sprint's top key attributes in earning CORT's business:

- Making technology easy for the customer to adopt; this entails clearly identifying and addressing customer needs so their user community can experience the results
- Making sure the services Sprint delivered provided measurable benefits, in terms of: cost savings, network simplification, improved productivity and reduced travel costs
- Being transparent in offers and providing the information customers need to manage the solutions they've implemented; i.e. detailed network visibility and the capability to manage traffic prioritization to support different convergence applications

Results:

- Adding convergence solutions allowed CORT to experience site to site communication without going through the head end - reducing PBX's and sites through consolidation through SIP services, and avoid network calamities
- There were no surprises; it was straightforward with proven technology and a natural progression for end users, supporting unified communications and a "work from anywhere" environment
- The operational efficiencies led to millions of dollars in savings and a ROI within 21 months.

Why does convergence matter? For one, we're all in the business of making money.

And in a competitive market, there's a constant need for adapting, innovating and improving productivity. This brings up the need to accelerate information (or get a faster return on information), reduce cost structure and avoid calamity. The great news is that all of these can be supported by Convergence Triple Play: or the combination of network, access and application convergence. In the following Executive Summary, we'll discuss each of these aspects, and give you multiple scenarios for improving your enterprise's communication flow.

NETWORK CONVERGENCE

Avoiding a static network

Most business networks are a mesh of locations and traffic types. However, in a pre-convergence world with multiple networks (one for voice, another for video and a third for data), the implication becomes "drowning in the overs"—or over subscription. It's also overly administrative and overly static. As businesses evolve and adapt to competition, a static network won't solve the panoply of needs.

The solution?

An MPLS/IPVPN (Multi Protocol Label Switching/Internet Protocol Virtual Private Network) has many great attributes that tackle the "overs."

They're lighter and thinner—all traffic is on one network, which optimizes the use of that network

There's generally a single provider contract—one contract to sign streamlines operations, eliminates multiple problems with multiple providers

Single administrative interface—only one portal to view and manage network issues, rather than multiple Web pages, log-ins and phone numbers

Adaptable—avoiding calamities like network outages or weather conditions, adaptability lets you move traffic from one location to the other as circumstances arise

Network convergence is "ON" in the marketplace

- In 2008, U.S. MPLS/IPVPN retail spending reached \$4.3 billion
- In 2010, U.S. MPLS/IPVPN, the retail spending rose to \$5.4 billion
- In 2014, as enterprises continue to adopt MPLS, spending is expected to rise to \$9 billion

ACCESS CONVERGENCE

It's not news that ours is a mobile world; business can be done anywhere in every way—through voice, video, data, on a handheld device, tablet or laptop. Smart phones, with increasing capabilities and bandwidth are becoming almost ubiquitous, which only means one thing: mobile integration. Access convergence is the ability to do business from any desk, any device, just about anywhere by using your mobile as a static phone, therefore having commonality between all portals and locations.

Mobile integration benefits:

Cost savings

As more users use smart phones while they're on the road and in the office, desktop phones are being covered in dust. Why not retire desktop phones and save money? Not only on the phone service, but the administration of it.

Business continuity

In weather calamities or travel scenarios when employees are unable to get to their desks or business locations, mobile integration allows clients to transparently catch them on their mobile devices. No business or communication is lost due to location change.

Number retention

With increasing mobile use, phone numbers are a business identity; a virtual association between the customer and the business the employee represents. With mobile integration, if an end user changes place of employment, the number association stays between the business and the customer, not the past employee and the customer.

About Cort

CORT, a Berkshire Hathaway Company, is the world's largest provider of residential and commercial rental furniture. In business for over 40 years, CORT has served millions of individuals as well as over 80% of Fortune 500 companies. CORT is also a leader in the rental of Tradeshow & Event furnishings. CORT has over 100 showrooms and clearance centers across the US, and has established a global network of business partners that allow us to provide solutions in close to 70 countries around the world. For more information visit www.cort.com

About Sprint

Sprint Business delivers wireless, wireline and converged solutions to enterprise, small- and medium-sized business and public sector customers, drawing on its 3G and 4G wireless capabilities, push-to-talk network, first-tier Global IP network, and a comprehensive portfolio of devices and applications. Sprint's Converged Solutions portfolio provides network integration for virtually anytime, anywhere connectivity and transforms nearly any place into a workplace. Sprint customers can simplify communications, reduce costs, and increase collaboration across business locations and departments. Learn more at www.sprint.com/convergence

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Access convergence also has fixed wireless capabilities (taking 4G or 3G networks to static locations, and connecting into the MPLS network).

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

Location flexibility and deployment speed

Instead of going through a local provider to get a T1-line running to a specific location, you can be up and running within days with wireless.

Uniformity

National wireless carriers provide coverage in just about every major market, so you will get a uniform price as well as uniform capabilities and provisioning.

True access diversity

Many business locations are wireline connected, which is fine, but if the line is severed, you and your business will be disconnected. With wireless connectivity in association with a wireline, you gain true access diversity. Even if wireline is disrupted for any reason, your wireless access still exists. With MPLS, you can manage your traffic appropriately between these two means of connectivity.

APPLICATION CONVERGENCE

Think of this as a building of technologies—as with many things, you build towards it.

SIP (Session Initiation Protocol) is a way to control calls — to set them up and tear them down; it controls unicast and multicast communication sessions over IP. You need a protocol as well as connectivity. SIP Trunking takes your end stations or PBX and allows you to connect those end stations to your MPLS network.

Hosted IP Telephony is the next stage

Many companies have been using PBXs for years. Wouldn't it be great to put that functionality to the network instead? You wouldn't have to procure or manage this physical asset—in your budget plan, hosted IP Telephony becomes an operational expense. It is accessible in equal fashion by all of your end stations, including mobile wireless endpoints.

UC and Collaboration is the peak of convergence

This means easily combining multiple modes of communication and collaboration (UCC). With a strong trend for multimedia operations, UCC serves the purpose of allowing businesses and users to be more productive and without travel costs.

ADAPTING TO THE FUTURE

Consumerization

Consumerization is the concept of devices built for consumer use being brought into the business world. Consumers are increasingly using these devices (like tablets, for instance) to also get their work done. In 2010, 13.3 million consumer tablets were sold in the U.S. alone. There's a strong adoption and quick turnaround by users who are anxious to get the latest and greatest. Support, internal security, and performance can be covered from a network perspective with solutions like MPLS and mobile integration.

The Cloud

We've all heard about the Cloud—a remote data center where information lives on the Internet rather than a hard drive.

- Increasingly, businesses are experimenting and using Cloud services
- Ultimately, it's a business decision, with each enterprise weighing expected outcomes with uncertainties
- Reasons for usage aren't uniform across all companies. Concerns include performance reliability, and security
- The cloud can represent another destination or endpoint with MPLS, wherein you can get strong performance at that end.

In conclusion, Convergence is happening .

Convergence provides an element of future — proofing your operations with a high level of dependability, plus adaptability, scalability, and manageability.

DISCLAIMER This Executive Summary discusses key insights and excerpts from a live presentation and panel discussion by Frost & Sullivan, Sprint and CORT on October 20, 2011. This summary presents industry insights, best practices, and case studies discussed by the presenters, in the context of the live presentation and panel discussion. For more details, visit www.frost.com/convergence. Frost & Sullivan is not responsible for the loss of original context or the accuracy of the information presented by the participating companies.