



## Customer Case Study

### **Single Path deploys a fully Unified Cisco Communications Solution allowing Amata Office Suites to leverage its network assets.**

#### **Overview**

Amata LLC, wanted to provide the best possible networking solution to its business clients across its newly created Executive Suites—one that could support the advanced applications its clients needed, while providing the flexibility Amata required to stay competitive and meet the demands of an ever-growing customer base.

#### **Business Challenge**

Chicago, Illinois-based Amata LLC is a business with a unique approach to attracting customers. Incorporated in 2002 as a print brokerage house, today Amata is the largest privately held executive office suites provider in Chicago. With several state-of-the-art facilities located throughout the Chicago area, Amata provides full- and part-time office solutions to companies of all sizes. Its clients range from large companies who want to open a sales office in strategic locations to small and start-up companies with limited budgets. Amata provides customized solutions to address each client's needs.

In addition to its executive suites, Amata continues to provide low-cost printing solutions to its clients and in October 2004 purchased the printing company to which it originally brokered work. With this acquisition, Amata has set itself apart from competitors by offering more of the services its clients need, at prices that are lower than they would receive elsewhere.

In recent years the company acquired the first of several executive suite locations in the Chicago area and commenced construction. In choosing sites, Amata looks to maximize convenience for its clients and looks for buildings that are in key locations. In addition, the company ensures that the infrastructure of the suites being built are constructed with all new materials, equipment and technology.

Each of the executive suites Amata builds represents a turnkey opportunity for the company's clients and provides everything a business might require to get its operations up and running without delay. Office furniture, telecommunications equipment, print materials—even staffing in the form of receptionists—is available to clients the minute they contract with Amata.



In preparing the locations to receive clients, Amata wanted to ensure that it installed a network that could accommodate the advanced features its future customers would need, at a cost both Amata and its clients could afford.

Company executives considered several proposals for communications solutions. Originally, Amata considered adopting a digital solution from Nortel, but was dissuaded upon learning what a pure IP solution could offer.

“We were approached by Tracy Creech, an account manager with Single Path, a Chicago-based company specializing in IP Communications solutions,” says Ron Bockstahler, Amata’s CEO. “She encouraged us to take a look at an IP networking solution.”

Single Path, a Cisco Systems® partner company, is the premier provider of converged communications for small and medium-size businesses (SMBs) in the Chicago area.

“When we learned what Amata wanted its communications system to do, we immediately suggested an IP Communications solution from Cisco,” says Creech. “The Cisco solution offered the best fit for Amata in a number of areas.”

First, she says, the Cisco solution offers flexibility.

“Originally, Amata was starting off small, and needed a solution that would support 25 client offices at its first location,” Creech explains. “However, the company expected to expand fairly rapidly, and required a communications solution that could expand with it.”

The company also required its solutions to be easy to use. “Ease-of-use and ease-of-deployment would provide Amata with a significant competitive advantage,” Creech explains. “Incoming clients would be able to take advantage of the advanced features of an IP Communications solution right away, without requiring a lot of instruction.”

Of equal importance to the company was security. “Clients coming in to Amata’s Executive Suites needed to be sure that the network solution Amata offered them was secure enough to protect their data,” Creech continues. “A converged network based on Cisco technology could offer both Amata and its client’s robust security to protect sensitive data.”

Finally, Amata needed a solution that would be cost-effective, both over the short and the long term. “Because the Cisco Communications solution can be deployed in a modular fashion, Amata only had to purchase what it needed at the time the technology was needed,” Creech says. “As the company and its client base grew, Amata had the option of expanding its network to accommodate that growth.”



## The Solution

Single Path recommended that Amata install a fully converged Cisco IP network, complete with a Cisco IP Telephony solution, which would serve to meet both the company's data networking and communications needs.

"This was the company's first major purchase, and they were a little nervous," says Creech.

The Cisco IP Telephony solution is a state-of-the-art communications solution that allows voice calls to travel over a company's data network. The solution includes:

- Infrastructure that can support multiple client types such as hardware phones, software phones, and video devices, as well as provide options for integrating traditional private branch exchange (PBX), voicemail, and directory systems.
- Cisco IP Phones, which combine the functions of a traditional telephone with an Ethernet connection and optional customizations such as access to stock quotes, employee extension numbers, and Web-based content.
- Cisco CallManager, a software-based call processing agent that extends enterprise telephony features and functions to packet telephony network devices such as IP phones, media processing devices, voice over IP (VoIP) gateways, and multimedia applications.

Single Path deployed redundant Cisco Catalyst® routers and switches, a wireless network based on Cisco Aironet® access points, Cisco PIX® firewalls, and a Cisco Unity™ Voice Messaging Software solution.

Single Path also recommended a third-party receptionist software solution to answer client calls on a per-suite basis from two separate Amata locations, as well as additional call accounting software for customer billing. Finally, Single Path installed redundant circuits to protect the company against any primary rate interface (PRI) failure.

"Because we were able to come in while Amata was in construction on its first suite, deployment was both quick and easy," Creech says. "Single Path engineers installed Ethernet drops to each of the specified office suites, and extended services across the entire site, allowing the company to offer the same quality infrastructure to new clients as they arrived."

Cisco Aironet access points were installed at key locations throughout the suites, which would allow Amata clients to access the network both from their own individual offices and all common areas and conference rooms on the entire floor.

"We want to provide our clients with the kinds of services that allow them to present the impression of an established company, even if they are only just beginning their



businesses,” says Bockstahler. “If a client needs to hold a meeting in one of the conference rooms, he or she needs access to its own communications system, including telephone extensions and data networking. The wireless networking solution makes that possible for each of our client companies.”

In addition, the Cisco IP Telephony solution makes adds, moves and changes to an individual client’s phone configuration simple, easy and affordable. “A traditional analog phone network would have required expensive technician visits to install, add, or move our clients’ extensions,” Bockstahler continues. “With the Cisco IP Telephony solution, adding to or changing a configuration is as simple as plugging the telephone in. And this saves our clients—and our business—both time and money, and gives us a real competitive advantage over other executive suite providers.”

Because the CallManager system is centralized, there is no need for Amata to purchase a new private branch exchange (PBX) for each new site. Redundancy is achieved by having each site act as a back up for every other location.

## **Results**

Bockstahler is pleased with the results of the deployment. “We estimate start-up savings of as much as [US] \$50,000 per site because we were able to eliminate the need for new PBXs at each site,” he says. “In addition, the Cisco IP Communications solution allows us to offer state-of-the-art technology to our clients, which is a very real competitive advantage.”

The deployment and maintenance of the network has been very smooth. “In Single Path, we have a single point of contact for any problems we may encounter,” Bockstahler explains. “Single Path has provided the training our staff needs to enable them to support our clients. And often, the Single Path team will recognize an event on the network and resolve it before it ever becomes a problem for either our company or our clients. The service Single Path has provided has been excellent.”

Although Amata started its executive suite business with only 25 offices, within a year of launching, it had expanded its office space to more than 200, and is continuing to grow.

“One of the things we appreciate most about our Cisco solutions are their abilities to grow with us,” says Bockstahler. “In addition, we feel confident that, in choosing Cisco, we’ve chosen a company with a history—one that will be around to provide us the support we may need as we grow.”