Single Path deploys a Unified 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 recent years the company has opened several executive suite locations. 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.

 "We were approached by Single Path, a premier provider of converged communications for small and medium-size businesses (SMBs) in the Chicago area, specializing in Unified Communication platform solutions," says Ron Bockstahler, Amata's CEO.

"When we learned what Amata wanted its communications system to do, we immediately suggested a Unified Communications solution from Cisco," says Tracy Garcia of Single Path. "The Cisco solution offered the best fit for Amata in a number of areas."

First, she says, the solution offers flexibility. "Originally, Amata was starting off small, and needed a solution that would support 25 client offices at its first location," Garcia explains. "However, the company expected to expand fairly rapidly, and required a communications solution that could expand with it." Today Amata has over 700 clients and the solution has scaled to meet those needs.

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," Garcia explains. "Incoming clients would be able to take advantage of the advanced features of a Unified 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," Garcia continues. "A converged network implemented by Single Path 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 solution can be deployed in a modular fashion, Amata only had to purchase what it needed at the time the technology was needed," Garcia 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 Unified Communications platform, which would serve to meet both the company's data networking and communications needs. The solution includes:

- Infrastructure that can support multiple client types such as hardware phones, software phones, video devices, and mobile devices.

- 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 Communications Manager, 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 routers and switches, a wireless network, firewalls, and a messaging solution.

"Because we have worked with Amata since their beginning as a company, deployment has been both quick and easy," Garcia 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."

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

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 of the solution we deployed," he says. "In addition, the Unified 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."

> "One of the things we appreciate most about our technology solutions are their abilities to grow with us. In addition, we feel confident that, in choosing Single Path, we've chosen a company with a history—one that will be around to provide us the support we may need as we grow."
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> -Ron Bockstahler, CEO, Amata