

The Right Call

Teoma Systems helps engineering innovation firm improve communications and customer service.

LMS North America has long understood how the collaborative powers of private corporate networks and the public Internet can be used to improve upon the traditional test-analyze-fix approach to product development. Through a unique combination of virtual simulation software, testing systems and engineering services, the Detroit-based firm helps companies in the automotive, aerospace and other advanced manufacturing industries get better products to market faster through superior process efficiency.

With LMS's software and hardware solutions, manufacturers can share product data and development information among internal departments, external suppliers and customers. Such integration lets manufacturers track and update products from concept and design through manufacturing and use by the customer. In this way, they can eliminate much of the costly trial and error that has plagued manufacturers since the industrial revolution.

When an aging PBX telephone system became increasingly unreliable and difficult to support, LMS naturally looked into solutions that leverage the tremendous communication capabilities of IP Telephony. With help and guidance from Teoma Systems, the company got a system that not only resolved its telephone issues but also enabled a host of new productivity and customer service benefits.

"We needed a new communications system, but at the same time we also wanted to develop a customer service call center," said Greg Hopton, General Manager, LMS North America.

"We are responsible for a lot of the customer service for our organization here at the headquarters in Detroit, and we wanted to see what we could do to be more efficient and help our customers more.

"We knew we wanted to look into IP phones, but we had some concerns about the costs, how they would network with our existing systems and how it would affect some of our other standards."

The Right Mix

Teoma showed LMS how they could resolve those concerns while still implementing an IP telephony solution. Teoma recommended a hybrid voice system, in which gateway technology allows an IP-PBX to be integrated with existing circuit-switched phone networks. In this way, LMS would be able to enjoy all the benefits of Voice over IP (VoIP) technology without the time and expense of a forklift upgrade. It also provides the flexibility of converting to a full-on VoIP system at a later date.

Teoma recommended an Avaya IP Office 412, which packages a phone system, voice messaging solution, auto attendant, router, firewall and VPN capabilities into a single platform. What's more, the Avaya IP Office facilitated the development of an efficient call center by integrating with customer relationship management products through an application called Compact Call Center (CCC).

CCC provides intelligent routing, reporting, voice and desktop applications that help call centers deliver personalized service that boosts cus-

tomers satisfaction and loyalty. With this solution, LMS can match customers with the call-center agent best able to help them. Screen pops and statistics help agents improve their productivity and detailed reporting provides call center managers with information they can use to run their operations more efficiently.

Added Features

"It's a different way of running the business," said Hopton. "We don't have all these individual pagers throughout the office. It's required some time to get used to it, but it has worked out well for everyone involved.

"Overall, I'm happy with the system. I think everyone sees it as a benefit to the organization. It is helping us handle customer services and individual calls, so it is doing the job as we want it to."

Teoma also built in wireless communication and unified messaging capabilities into the system, allowing LMS employees to receive voice mail and e-mail across the desktop. In addition, Teoma integrated a new videoconferencing solution that will enable LMS North America staff to communicate directly with LMS International headquarters in Leuven, Belgium.

Hopton said Teoma's VP of Sales, Dan Janer, and the entire Teoma team made the transition a fairly painless process.

"It's been a good experience, and Dan has been very good," he said. "We actually had a third-party individual in the loop, and Teoma worked well with them to ensure this project was successful. We've been very pleased."