

Managed Services Help Smaller Businesses Close the Competitive Gap

TRAVERSE CITY, (MI) — May 8, 2007 — The Internet has given rise to new technologies that provide a competitive edge for the companies — mainly large enterprises — that implement them. However, much of this technology involves significant capital investments to acquire it and trained staff to support it; these are resources that are often in short supply at small to mid-sized businesses. For many of these companies and organizations, therefore, difference-making technologies are simply out of reach.

Managed services providers (MSPs) are bridging this technology gap by offering a range of services from phone systems to network management to data storage and recovery. By eliminating or dramatically reducing the financial and human resources needed for technology deployment and day-to-day management, MSPs offer smaller organizations access to technology that they could not otherwise afford.

"The MSP model is simple," said Victor von Schlegell, president of Appia Communications, a leading MSP, "We invest in best-of-breed technology and amortize that investment over hundreds of customers. So customers pay far less than they would if they invested in the technology on their own. We also have a staff of certified experts and support technicians, allowing customers to avoid hiring additional personnel with the expertise to support the technology."

The rapidly growing industry of managed voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is one example of MSPs enabling smaller organizations to adopt new technologies. A recent study of the hosted VoIP industry by New York-based AMI-Partners forecasts that the North American market will reach \$1.56 billion by 2010, up from \$164.9 million in 2005 – an annual growth rate of 56.9%.

"The concept of voice communications as a service is becoming very appealing as these small businesses have almost no IT and voice communications expertise and resources," said Sanjeev Aggarwal, AMI-Partners' Vice President for SMB Infrastructure Solutions.

Glen Corkill, President and Chief Executive Officer of Chicago-based Source North America, agrees. "We're really too small to have all the technology people on staff to do IP telephony, yet we want to have a nationwide, best-in-class phone system," Corkill said. "With Appia, we get the best of both worlds, and I have complete peace of mind. It's the perfect solution for a company that wants to focus on its customers and not its phone systems."

Outsourcing communications services can also result in impressive cost savings. "We routinely see customers saving 30 to 40 percent per month," observed von Schlegell of Appia, "But beyond the cost savings, customers also enjoy productivity-enhancing services, such as find-me-follow-me and unified messaging, that only high-end PBX equipment can provide."

Network management, another important managed service, provides another example of productivity benefits. "For the most part, our customers have networking staff available only during normal business hours," continued von Schlegell. "By outsourcing network support, networks are monitored—and problems are resolved—on a 24/7/365 basis. When networks are always available, employee productivity is improved and customer satisfaction increases."

For more information about managed IT and telecommunications services from Appia Communications, please call 877.277.4297 or visit www.appiaservices.com.

About Appia Communications

Appia Communications is a leading provider of managed IT and telecommunications services. Our mission is to enable small and mid-sized companies and organizations to realize the benefits of Internet Protocol (IP) technology. Our managed solutions help our customers to reduce costs, enhance employee productivity, improve customer care, and allow them to compete more effectively against much larger enterprises.

Headquartered in Traverse City, Michigan, Appia has operations in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, Indianapolis, St. Louis, and other markets in North America and Europe. For more information, please call 877-277-4297 or visit www.appiaservices.com.

