

ENTERPRISES ADOPT UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

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AVST Addresses How Businesses Can Effectively Migrate Toward Unified Communications for the Workplace

London, December 16, 2004 – When it comes to workplace communications in the 21st Century, employees have more ways than ever to stay in touch—from desk phones, mobile phones, pagers and PDAs to, email, instant messaging, faxes and Web conferencing. While all these technologies allow for greater access and mobility, the increased onslaught of communication requests and messages, and the expectation of an immediate response, can be overwhelming for users, IT personnel and enterprise infrastructures. This is why many corporations are migrating toward second generation enterprise communications systems (ECS) that provide converged technologies and unified communications feature sets.

Today there are more avenues open to reach workers than ever before. Whether by desk phone, mobile phone, pager, email, voice mail or fax, people use any and all methods available to track down an intended recipient. With hundreds of messages flooding the inbox each day, managing messages has become a daunting task for employees and a time-consuming financial drain for businesses. It is no longer acceptable to be unavailable or to be slow to respond to messages. With the latest real-time communications capabilities, a reply is expected almost immediately by customers, clients, partners and other employees. Not responding quickly could result in missing an important business opportunity or cultivating a perception that a person is unresponsive.

Across every occupation and industry, effectively dealing with the increasing communications barrage is a serious business issue. Unfortunately, legacy communications infrastructures can no longer handle the way businesses need to communicate. As the workforce has become increasingly mobile, work no longer equates to going to the office.

The problem is that each communications technology typically sits in its own silo—unable to integrate with the others. Instead of accessing one application or dialling one number to send and receive communications or get all voice and data messages, today's employees are logging into multiple systems, dialling several numbers and accessing messages on more than one device.

The convergence of these systems has driven enterprises to an important transition point in the evolution of their communications systems. In order to handle current communications needs, many corporations are making the move to second generation (2G) enterprise communications systems that include unified communications and unified messaging capabilities as part of their feature set.

Moving to a 2G enterprise communications solution doesn't necessarily mean ripping out current phone systems and jumping headfirst into the new world of IP telephony. According to Applied Voice & Speech Technologies Inc. (AVST), a leading provider of unified communications for the enterprise market, the key point to remember is that the ideal 2G solution will let a company evolve at its own pace.

"An effective UC solution allows the IT manager to layer a single second-generation solution across all existing office locations and phone switches—IP and legacy," explains AVST's President and CEO

Hardy Myers. "This reduces the management burden, provides all users with a consistent set of productivity-enhancing services and presents callers with a unified company image."

Giving its customers a single, consistent corporate "face" was one of the key reasons why global law firm Weil, Gotshal and Manges switched from an Octel voice mail system to CallXpress, a robust 2G unified communications solution from AVST.

"We have 18 offices spread all over the world," says Randy Burkart, director of IS programs for Weil, Gotshal and Manges. "It's very important that our callers have a similar experience whether they call our office in Boston, London or Shanghai. We also have a certain percentage of mobile users that move from office to office. It really helps if the phone system at the remote office works the same as the one at home."

"Lawyers are essentially relationship managers," Burkart continues. "They live on email and phone calls. If our accounting system dies, they can live without it for a few days, but if we have email or voice mail problems, their eyes are popping out within 30 seconds."

After implementing AVST's CallXpress solution at Weil, Gotshal and Manges, Randy Burkart understands the importance of an easy-to-manage solution with a robust feature set. "The most important thing for us is CallXpress's incredible reliability," said Burkart. "We don't have a tolerant user community when it comes to an unreliable product. They expect it to work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Fortunately it's a very solid platform. We're very pleased with CallXpress, and we're absolutely convinced that we made the right decision."

About AVST

Applied Voice & Speech Technologies, Inc. (AVST) is a leading developer of enterprise communications solutions for businesses of all sizes. Through its world-class unified communications platform, CallXpress®, and its innovative speech applications module, Seneca™, AVST offers the industry's most powerful suite of enterprise communications solutions. AVST's solutions enable direct access to an enterprise's communications infrastructure including voice mail, e-mail and fax messaging from any voice or data device via a touch-tone, GUI or speech interface. Established in September 2003, AVST was formed from the combined businesses of Sound Advantage (established in 1997) and the CallXpress division (established in 1982) of Captaris, Inc.

Headquartered in Foothill Ranch, CA, AVST maintains facilities in Bellevue, WA and the UK and has remote sales offices across the United States. With over 34,000 systems installed worldwide, AVST's communications solutions are sold and supported internationally by an extensive network of resellers and OEM partners. For more information contact Paul Donaldson, Regional Director on 0870 444 8403 or access the company's website at www.avstgroup.com.

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