THE SEVEN-STEP ENTERPRISE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Submitted by: Mpower

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AVST Offers Businesses Advice on Building a Unified Communications Plan

London, February 28, 2005 – Today's business environment is fraught with highly mobile workers, demanding customers, constantly changing market conditions, multiple communications types and overwhelmed employees. According to Applied Voice & Speech Technologies (AVST), businesses cannot compete effectively or make the quick, informed decisions necessary to thrive without taking control of their communications methods. Therefore, AVST is providing businesses with advice on how to build an effective communications strategy in a new white paper that helps organisations plan for, implement and use unified communications (UC) to gain the competitive edge needed to stay ahead of the game.

When considering a switch to unified communications, AVST encourages businesses to adhere to the following seven-step strategy:

1. Consider the state of your business, identify the workforce dynamics for each segment of your workforce and evaluate your competitive position.
2. Evaluate the state of your current voice and data network infrastructure including the costs of maintenance, administration, and so forth.
3. Determine the next generation features needed to help you maintain or enhance your competitive position.
4. Research next generation solutions that have most or all of those features.
5. Compare a third-party system that works with all of your switches to a switch vendor's solution.
6. Evaluate overall total cost of ownership of each solution.
7. Test the top products as a final step in choosing a solution.

According to AVST, a leading provider of unified communications for the enterprise market, implementing a unified communications solution doesn't necessarily mean ripping out current phone systems and jumping headfirst into the new world of IP telephony.   "The key point to remember is that the ideal next generation solution will let a company evolve at its own pace," said AVST's Vice President of Marketing, Denny Michael. "An effective UC solution allows the IT manager to layer a single solution across all existing office locations using both IP and legacy phone switches."

When deploying a next generation enterprise communications solution, an organisation should be able to upgrade its existing phone switches, or migrate to IP telephony, with virtually no disruption to employees and the organisation, and no need for retraining. AVST's industry-leading unified communications solution, CallXpress®, provides companies with this level of compatibility and flexibility.

CallXpress has a robust feature set that unifies email, voice mail and fax inboxes, offers an advanced speech-enabled automated attendant and interactive voice response, and enables hands-free phone access to voice mail, e-mail, fax, calendar and contacts. Organisations can implement CallXpress across more than 250 different phone switches in multiple locations, providing the same features and interfaces to all users and the same corporate face to all callers while protecting and extending the life of past

infrastructure investments.

For example, AVST helped global law firm Weil, Gotshal and Manges maintain a single, consistent corporate "face" by switching their Octel® voice mail system to CallXpress. With 18 offices all over the world, a quick and easy implementation rollout was the key to success.

"We did eight office conversions over four weekends. It was pretty much a cookie-cutter process and didn't take long at all," said Randy Burkart, director of IS programs for Weil, Gotshal. "Our lawyers make extensive use of BlackBerry® devices, which let them retrieve email regardless of their location. With CallXpress, now they can get voice mail alerts on their BlackBerry screens as well, and use the built in phone to dial right out."

AVST is working with Ziff Davis Media to provide a series of white papers and eSeminars aimed at enterprise-level CTO's, CIO's and IT managers like Burkart. The goal is to arm industry leaders with a deeper understanding of the need to replace outdated voice mail systems and the options available to them as they explore next generation communications strategies

The AVST white paper, titled "Building an Enterprise Communications Strategy Beyond Voice Mail," gives readers a deep understanding of the capabilities and benefits of UC solutions, offers advice on how to build and implement UC, and includes helpful tools such as case studies, evaluation surveys and a comprehensive strategy. The white paper is available through Ziff Davis Media at the following link: http://internet.ziffdavis.com/creatives/AVST/.

The next eSeminar titled "Seven Easy Steps to Develop an Enterprise Communications Strategy" will take place at 5.30 p.m UK time on Wednesday, March 2, 2005. To register for this free, online seminar, please visit: www.eSeminarslive.com. To fit in with busy executives this can be viewed at any convenient time after March 2nd at www.eseminarslive.com in the Past Events section.

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 United Kingdom 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, UK Regional Director, at 01676 531180 or access the company's website at www.avstgroup.com.

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