

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interview on behalf of Qwest

Jamie Trujillo

Doss Aviation

General Manager, Information Tech

Last updated: 2008 Sep 19



Product(s): CPE: Cisco 3800 Series Routers, CPE: Cisco Call Manager
Industry: Transportation

1. Business need

"Ours was strictly a greenfield implementation. Everything that we were doing was all brand new. It's kind of one of those things; we needed an integrator who could come in and actually provide us an end-to-end solution, something that we knew we could rely on from a scalability perspective, from a management perspective, from an ease-of-use, if you will. And really when we looked at the greenfield implementation, we looked at the site that we had; it was kind of one of those that we knew we could leverage a cost savings if we went with an integrated solution versus kind of a piecemeal voice/data solution. So the solution we ended up ultimately choosing allowed us to do that.

In the TDM world versus the voice over IP world, you do not have a central area for TDM service--well, you do; you have a central phone closet, if you will. But that phone closet is full of all kinds of copper wires. It's going everywhere; it looks like you need a decoder ring to get everything out of that room. The voice over IP environment is, quite frankly, all server-based. Basically, you plug a phone into the wall, that phone talks to the server and registers itself and bingo--you have yourself a fully functioning extension wherever you'd like it to be.

The key for us--again, going back to ease of management as one of those things that we absolutely had to have because of our small IT department. I could not sacrifice a technician in a TDM closet cross-connecting wires all day long. We don't have time for that kind of implementation. So when the voice over IP solution was brought to us, we said 'Hey--you mean I can dedicate one technician for my phones and I don't have to back that up in the phone closet? That's the way to go.' And that's what we chose."

2. Evaluation & selection

"We looked at three different integrators. We looked at an Avaya solution, a Nortel solution, and of course the Cisco/Qwest that were brought to us. Basically, the driving need there was who could provide us the best integration at the most cost effective value. Honestly, Qwest and Cisco in general were not part of that discussion to begin with; the cost there was not one that we were considering; turns out the other solutions were indeed a little cheaper. Kind of as we worked through the process, the selection criteria, we found that the Qwest solution--the Cisco solution more specifically--not only was most cost effective because, again, like I said, because of the management principle, but also because of the support that we get from our integrator. Our integrator is there with us 24x7, 365/366. We didn't get that level of comfort from our other integrators. We felt that we had the direct line to our hardware supplier in Cisco; we did not feel as though we had that through Avaya or Nortel--that it was all a straight reseller relationship. So at the end of the day, the ability to get straight to the integrator themselves--to Cisco in this case--and the costs that they put in front of us, really, that's kind of where we went."

3. Why Qwest?

"First off, our account team couldn't have been any better. We were very pleased to have people who could design the solution for us. They were great at it. Their customer service and follow-up skills as well as the overall installation--really, that is what sealed the deal for me. The fact that my account team put the time into me that I was expecting out of my account team, basically sat with me through hand-holding of the process, everything I was asking for; designed the solution that I specified--they didn't sell me a bill of goods, they didn't sell me a solution that I didn't need; they sold me the one that I wanted, they sold me the one that worked best for our business. Honestly, it was not the cheapest solution--it was not the cheapest solution at all. We really thought cost was going to be the main driving factor, and it ended up being a big deal here, but we chose the most expensive

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solution by far and away--and we did that because we had that level of comfort with our account team. We knew we weren't going to be left high and dry when it came down to install and implementation. We knew our account team was going to stand strong with us."

4. The implementation/installation

"Qwest did an outstanding job with the design phase; that was the first part of this. The design phase was one that was critical to me because coming out of the gate, we had to have this thing right. Even though we're a greenfield site, we didn't get a lot of chances for error, as our timeframes were kind of constricted here. We had roughly six months to completely get this network online and operational. Qwest put together a design that was functional and really accomplished the needs in a short period of time. The account team came in, put together everything that they needed to put together, brought us out the costs, brought us out the solution--here's where we're gonna go. Quick negotiation period; contracts were signed. After that part, the installers came in and our technicians that were here for Qwest did an outstanding job--very thorough. They put in the hours that were required; that was the other thing that was very important to me--my account team did not leave me hanging through any of this process. They put in the hours that were required. We had midnight some nights that we were here in this building trying to integrate this network. Qwest did an outstanding job and did not quit anytime during this process.

Our facility is an old lead-shielded cockpit part manufacturing building; it's 250,000 square feet of existing complex that we had to gut out and completely start from scratch. We pulled all cabling out, we pulled all the voice wiring out, all existing data wiring--everything came out. And we looked at our integrator to piggyback on top of our existing cable solution. Basically, we had a cabler come in, put the cabling in, then brought our integrator in for the last part of the hardware installation for switches, routers, IP phones, etc. Because it was brand new, we were able to put the cabling where we wanted to; we were able to deploy the phones in the order we wanted to deploy them in; and we were able to bring switches and routers into the network when we felt the time was applicable."

5. Overview of solution

"We didn't actually start with Qwest as our communications provider; we started with a CLEC--competitive local exchange carrier--and Qwest was able to come in and engineer a voice solution based on that company, and the technology we used for that was SIP, an IP-to-IP gateway throughout our 3845 core router. Worked out great for a little while, and then our CLEC began to have some challenges and got to the point where our phone system was going down really for days at a time really every month--quite unacceptable in our line of business. So we asked Qwest to come back and engineer for us a voice solution that would enable Qwest to become our default voice provider, and they did that--rode to our rescue, if you will--and had us in T1 lines within a week, had us migrated over within two. And that told me everything I needed to know about our relationship going forward with Qwest.

They also provide for us the full scale hardware solution; they provide for us all of our IP phones; they provide for us our CallManager system; they provided for us our router and switch gear and the end-to-end management of all of those as well through their SMARTnet branded contracts.

With respect to security-enhanced technologies, we bought from Qwest network access control as well as what we call Cisco Secure Monitoring and Reporting System--CSMARS, if you will, for short. Both of those are in place today to help us monitor and protect our network against external and internal threats that we have. We found as we evaluated those solutions as well, in conjunction with both our network access control system and our IP content filter, we're able to provide complete and total network security for both our students as they go through our facility as well as the staff on their side as well."

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6. Customer service

"Our account team is really three major people: Our account manager, our sales engineer, and our CPE specialist. The CPE specialist and the sales engineer really took the design really by the horns and really put together the solution for us that we eventually bought from Qwest. It turns out the CPE specialist was extremely knowledgeable in everything that he was doing, and our account manager provided us that layer one support that we expected as well. Our sales engineer--our sales engineer was able to quote many things out for us, did a great job throughout the lifecycle of the quoting process, got the quotes to me in the time that I needed them and was able to get the contracts sealed up as I needed those as well. So we found, again, that the account team was critical to this process and really was the key to making this whole implementation succeed."

7. Non-financial benefits

"Ease of management is our very first thing that we talk about all the time with this network. We've found that with our small shop, we're able--because the system is pretty hands-off for the most part--we're able to focus our resources on other things, other projects; laptops for our students, staff-side PCs that have different failure rates; other things that we need to focus on as an IT department. We do not have to worry about our integrated solution; we do not have to worry about our firewall; we do not have to worry about our routers or switch gear. That alone is the biggest single component of our business--the fact that we do not have to allocate resources we don't have to things that we quite frankly should not be having to worry about. This solution accomplishes that for us and then some--frees up, for me, hours; hours per week as an IT manager, and it frees up hours per week for my technician as well."

8. Measurable benefits

"At the end of the day, it was really how many hours can we free for different projects that we have to do? As this department manages eight different systems throughout this complex, the less time that we spend on our phone communication/integrated system, the more time we can focus on those other specialized software programs. We are responsible for lifeblood applications here; applications that, quite frankly, if they go down, we're out of business. It's that simple. And the measurable result for us--the most quantifiable thing I can say--is that I do not have to worry about either of those problems because I can focus the resources I need on our most critical applications thanks to the ease of management of our phone system and our communications system. "

9. Areas for improvement

"I cannot think of anything that would change my experience today. We have zero problems with Qwest--at all. Our problem is with our CLEC, and Qwest was able to come in and repair those issues. They--I like to use this term a lot--they were my knights, my knights in shining armor, because they took a solution from me that did not work, one that I'd originally picked from a competitor of theirs and they were able to come in and fix that solution for me when it did not work. And because of that, I'll be looking to move the rest of my business to Qwest in due time as well. We do have some technologies that are not there and we plan to move those in the near future."

10. Future plans

"Right now, we're looking at a network expansion. We are looking at some new laptop issues for our students as they pass through the complex. To do that, we'll need some increased network infrastructure; we don't have that today. We're looking at some wireless applications as well; things that--quite frankly, I just don't feel like putting cable to every room in the building again, and because of that, we believe that Qwest can engineer a wireless

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solution for us that'll accommodate that and then some.

We're always looking to enhance our security--always. Security is a never-ending job for the IT department. It's something we always watch, every single day. We're looking at Websense; we're looking at additional content filtering technologies; we're looking at ways to improve our network access control; we're looking for ways that we can improve CSMARS. Always looking to better this network, and Qwest is really going to be positioned well to help us out with that."

11. Recommendations and advice

"The first thing I would tell a prospective customer is to ignore the CLECs. Unless you have a preexisting relationship with the CLEC, it's best to let Qwest integrate the entire solution for you. We learned that the hard way, unfortunately. And I can't discount all CLECs; not all CLECs will have the same experience that we had with, but we can tell you this kind of a solution, this integrated solution--Qwest has a solution for everything, from one end to the other end.

I would also make sure that your account team is the one you would like. We were very fortunate and got an account team that was thorough, dedicated, and knew what they were doing. I think you're going to find that with every account team at Qwest. Just have your feelings with them in place first. Make sure they understand what it is that you as a customer want to do. They will make every attempt to make sure that that happens."



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