

# INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interview on behalf of Qwest

Jon Reineke

MacArthur Co.

IT manager

Last updated: 2009 Jun 12



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**Product(s): CPE: Cisco , One Flex: Integrated Access**  
**Industry: Manufacturing, Construction**

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## 1. Business need

"The major business problem that MacArthur was facing was the fact that we were having anywhere from three to four outages a week. These would amount to a significant amount of downtime; it could be anywhere from a couple of hours to five or six hours for our branches.

Anytime that we face something like that, we run the risk of losing our customers--they can call a competitor just as easy.

One of the other problems we faced was the fact that when we'd call our service provider, they'd get into a finger-pointing game where we weren't really sure if it was our equipment or our service."

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## 2. Evaluation & selection

"The things that we were looking for were we wanted to have one source to call; we wanted them to be able to work with the end user, who is not necessarily going to be a technical individual; we wanted them to be able to diagnose 'Whose problem was it?'; and we wanted quick resolution.

The way we evaluated other companies was we conducted several phone interviews and we talked to people--we put together a list of problems we had had and asked them if they'd had similar issues, and then we also asked them 'How much do you trust your current provider in terms of how much access are you gonna give them to your network?'

In a lot of cases, people trusted their provider to the point where they gave them all administrative access. We wanted to find somebody who was just like that."

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## 3. Why Qwest?

"Well, the reason we chose Qwest and Cisco was in the course of evaluating other providers, we discovered that Qwest already had the service that we were looking for, and being that we were a Qwest customer, it made sense to go down the Qwest-Cisco route.

One of the things we also discovered was that the Cisco phone system really fit into what we were trying to accomplish, which was if somebody calls us, whatever time of the day it is, if we have a branch open, we could route that call and get that person one-on-one personable service.

Part of the reason we went with the Qwest-Cisco solution was because we saw it fulfilled our network needs today, but it fulfills our phone system needs tomorrow."

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## 4. The implementation/installation

"The initial implementation was--MacArthur's on Integrated Access with FlexOne [Qwest® OneFlex® Integrated Access service] and in a number of these sites--in 22 of those sites, we had Siemens routers and we needed to swap those out for the Cisco equipment.

In those cases, we went out on site to the first one, we installed the Cisco router; there were a few bumps and

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bruises along the way--we ended up getting a Cisco tech case opened up and we also had to get IronPort in place--IronPort's another product that does our proxy service--and it took us about seven hours to get that one up and functional.

From there, we rolled out another site--I think we had it up in 10 minutes, and from there it was--we were pretty much boxing up the remaining 21 routers out to the other locations.

We shipped them out, we sent along documentation, and we talked the end users through how to hook them up, and with Qwest's help we had them all on the integrated management system by the 29th of January.

The Qwest training has been awesome. There's definitely no doubt about it--they made it fun, they made it easy to understand.

You know, people kind of walked out of training and were like 'That's it?' And it's really--they made the equipment seem that easy, not only from, you know, the end user who's just answering the phone, but for the person who's trying to do the special features--the call forward, the conference pieces, the using the directories and things.

They made it easy for me to understand how to add, remove, delete users; moving people from one office to another; swapping in and out equipment. There really isn't anything about this system that feels difficult anymore."

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## 5. Overview of solution

"Well, MacArthur's roughly 35 sites. We were looking--we have somewhere in the neighborhood of 350 pieces of equipment on our network and it supports somewhere between, I'm guessing, 450 to maybe 500 users total, and we use Qwest service wherever we can.

We have a 20-meg line, which is our Internet connection in the Twin Cities. All of our branches connect back to St. Paul using Integrated Access, FlexOne [Qwest OneFlex Integrated Access service]--actually, 28 of those sites are; there's a couple of sites that're just MPLS. And something new that we're doing right now is the IA Private Port, which is basically Integrated Access with MPLS, and we're gonna be rolling those out very shortly.

Qwest also provides us integrated management, and that integrated management covers the 22 routers we purchased from Cisco; it also covers a 3845 Cisco router; there's a couple of 5520 firewalls. Those, in turn, support our IronPort solution, which is also--we purchased it just before Cisco had it.

There are three phone systems--there's three servers with our phone system, the 7825s; there's a pub, a sub, and a Unity server. There's a VG224 that we purchased through this.

All of our phones are 7941s and 7961s; they're not the ultra-high end, but they're not the lowest, either. But the functionality that they bring is so far beyond what we had it's absolutely incredible. Everybody loves their new phones--in fact, our end users are learning to do more things than I ever intended to teach them."

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## 6. Customer service

"Well, the Qwest support has been awesome. I mean, we went from any--like I had said before, we went from three to four [calls to tech support] a week to--I think I've had maybe one phone call a month since we moved over.

It's been awesome having people be able to--non-technical people--be able to phone in, report a problem, and have it resolved immediately. I mean, Qwest has pretty much been Johnny-On-The-Spot for all of our problems.

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We purchased IronPort a little over a year and a half ago and it wasn't until Qwest got involved that we actually made that product work the way it's supposed to.

I mean, it was supposed to be a transparent piece; it was supposed to slip into our network and nobody was even supposed to know it was there unless, of course, they tried to go somewhere on the Internet they weren't supposed to.

And one of the things that happened right up front was I had said to the Qwest technicians 'I really want to make this work if at all possible during this rollout.'

The guys that we worked with were fired up to help us out in any way possible. We got Cisco involved, we had Qwest involved, we had IronPort involved, and we came up with a fix inside of a couple of hours for something that we hadn't been able to fix in over a year and a half."

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## 7. Non-financial benefits

"Well, the Cisco features we found absolutely valuable for us that I didn't really see when we were looking at it to begin with is probably the conference calls, the call forwarding--the very simple, basic tasks that I kind of took for granted from an IT perspective that I knew the phone could do.

MacArthur didn't--while I think they wanted it--didn't know it was all gonna be part of the initial rollout, and our sales department pretty much jumped on top of the ability to be able to forward their phone calls direct to our cell phones; the ability to have people call in looking for them and have it transferred directly to their cell phone and the end customer doesn't even know they're not in the office; the ability to pull together a conference call at the drop of a hat--I mean, that stuff right there is awesome for the sales department.

The support piece about what we gained is the fact that we can log on online, we can go to Cisco.com, we can look up solutions--[and] we actually have a piece of equipment that the rest of the world is dealing with.

The problem we were running into before was we kind of had off-the-wall off-brand, and unless you really applied yourself or it was something that really interested you, you couldn't find answers easily; it made it rather difficult for us to stay on top of what our network was doing."

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## 8. Measurable benefits

"For myself, I'm probably saving easily 10 to 12 hours a week that I don't have to spend on the phone dealing with some kind of network outage anymore.

Right now, if a branch calls another branch and you're on the Integrated Access, there's no long-distance fees. We make a lot of phone calls between branches and so we'll just assign a St. Paul number to our Little Chute branch and immediately we've eliminated a ton of long-distance calls to that branch. Anytime they dial an outside line to go to a long-distance, they're gonna come straight through St. Paul.

They dial a local number, it'll still show up on a caller ID to the local service as somebody in town, so I mean there's huge benefits in being able to do that not only in this branch, but in several other little offshoot branches going forward.

As we started looking at MacArthur as a whole, we really realized that we spent an awful lot more a month than we probably realized, and what we were able to do was we're saying 'Look, we're willing to guarantee a larger number to Qwest per month in order to renegotiate our contracts, and in one case we actually saved ourselves 1,000 dollars a month on our 20-meg line just right off the cuff from the beginning of the year, which for this year, you know,

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12,000 dollars, that's pretty sweet at the end of the year.

One of the things that I started adding up was 'How much did it cost to deploy the old way versus the new way?'

I think the difference in cost was when you get done with the wiring and all of the equipment and all of the different people to set up the old system, it was coming in at somewhere in the neighborhood of about 35,000 dollars to set up a branch, and the new way, which was half the wiring, half the equipment--not to mention the fact that it actually integrates into what we already have--it came out to about 22,000 dollars to install a new branch of the same size.

One of the things that we realized with Cisco equipment was the fact that we didn't have to go out and find somebody special to work on it; there's a number of people available that could work on it for us. You can make a phone call to just about anyone and they've got a Cisco technician available, so that helped us out quite a bit.

I mean, at one point we considered hiring another person to help me keep up, and because we no longer have this oddball equipment out there, our network's now manageable to myself and some part-time help here and there.

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## 9. Areas for improvement

"This is one of those questions that I went through quite a few times trying to figure out where Qwest could provide better service to me, and about the only thing that I've had a little bit of difficulty with has been like the Q.Control service. And I think maybe a little of that is probably my own fault because I haven't logged in and really applied myself to it, but sometimes finding the answers that you're looking for, navigating through it, has been a little bit difficult for me. But other than that, I mean, there's always been somebody I can call and they'll usually walk me through what I need to do."

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## 10. Future plans

"We're looking to be able to use some of the technology that's available through our new Cisco phone system, some of the things being like the softphones and being able to place our salespeople in more of a work-from-home atmosphere.

We've now given people VPN access--very solid VPN access--into our network, so they can actually get their day started before they hit the office."

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## 11. Recommendations and advice

"If I had to make one suggestion to anyone who's considering either what they're gonna buy for equipment or who they're gonna use for their support, it's put together a list of all the things that you hate about what's going on in your organization right now; find somebody who fills about 85 percent of that and then talk to them about 'How do you get to about 95?'

I don't think there's a perfect solution out there, but I know for MacArthur, I think we have just about everything we could've hoped for out of our current solution with both Qwest and with Cisco."