

# INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interview on behalf of Qwest

Bill Norman

Select Comfort

Manager of Telecommunications

Last updated: 2008 Nov 20



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**Product(s): One Flex: Integrated Access**  
**Industry: Manufacturing, Retail**

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## 1. Business need

"Well, the top three that I had for the business need or objective was consolidation of existing carriers, reducing our costs, and upgrading the speed of our Internet connection at our sites. We had a number of local exchange carriers throughout our 450 stores, so we probably had 50 to 60 different vendors that we dealt with on a monthly basis and got billed by them, so we were looking to consolidate to reduce the number of players that we had to deal with. We had a price objective for each store and when we looked at different solutions, we took that price objective for each store and compared it to what we could get and, with a technology upgrade, could we break even from what our current cost structure was to what the proposed cost structure would be from all the different vendors who participated.

For a technology upgrade, we're really looking to increase Internet speeds. The majority of our sites had 144k DSL and we were looking to upgrade to a T1 facility which we could get a four-hour SLA on, and also upgrade our speeds up to 768k of Internet."

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## 2. Evaluation & selection

"We went through a formal RFP process and we did have a number of criteria we were looking for. One was what company could cover the majority of our stores? Another one was who could provide competitive long-distance rates for us? And also, what telecom company could fit into our current Cisco CallManager infrastructure that we had? All the vendors that came back to us on our RFP--I believe we had four--maybe two of the four could cover a majority of our stores; some could only provide limited coverage of stores while others could provide very good discounted long distance rates. So in this process, it became pretty evident that out of the four contenders, we really had two main ones that could address our selection criteria. We did look at breaking up our long-distance contract from our store contract, but when it came down to it, we felt that it'd be best to go with one vendor for both solutions.

During our selection, we looked at vendors we already had a business relationship with and we looked at the pricing structure of the proposed solutions--you know, we were really looking at somebody who had a strong local presence in our area.

The RFP process took a total of six to eight weeks, and part of it was because we had a change of management during that time we came in, but all the vendors that participated were pretty much in it for about six weeks, and then the final two weeks we concentrated on the two primary vendors."

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## 3. Why Qwest?

"The reason we chose Qwest was because of a strong presence in our area. Qwest covered the most stores of any vendor and a lot of it came down to many of our sites are in the Qwest 14-state area, but they cover many out-region areas also and they could cover 365 of our 450 sites; the next nearest competitor could cover about 280 sites. We already use Qwest for a number of services in our corporate facility. We had a number of stores already serviced by Qwest in the 14-region Qwest area, and their pricing was the lowest that came in of all the vendors.

We were impressed with their local account team and we were impressed with the project management skills and team they brought forward during our RFP process to address our questions on how would this project be completed. They provided a very precise and detailed project plan about how we would get through this deployment of our 365 sites."

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## 4. The implementation/installation

"The installation in the stores went extremely well considering in our past, it took us up to two years to deploy DSL in our stores; we deployed this Integrated Access product in 300 of our stores in about 10 weeks. The other 65 stores took another four weeks, but only because being in a mall environment, they were more difficult sites to install. The detail that Qwest brought was very good. We felt the project from beginning to end went extremely well. We certainly had a few hiccups along the way, but Qwest was quick to address those and brought solutions to the table quickly for some of our more troubled sites and installations."

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## 5. Customer service

"The customer service from Qwest has been excellent. They assigned us right away a lead customer service advocate who we could call or e-mail on a daily basis who would escalate any issues that we had as far as installations went. We also had a strong local Qwest team including our account rep and their management who would take our issues and work on them immediately. When we did have some capacity issues early on in the project, they addressed those by bringing in a senior level Qwest executive and it made our management feel much more secure in our decision and also displayed that Qwest was taking action to resolve some of these issues.

Specifically from our local team, the technical competence is very strong and they are able to address any questions that we had, whether it was on the actual physical installation of equipment or on feature sets that come with the Qwest IA product. We also have talked to Qwest product development people who have been excellent in covering all areas of features of their product to our satisfaction."

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## 6. Experience with Qwest Control®

"My staff uses Qwest Control on a weekly basis and they do the eBilling piece of it; that's the majority of our time right now is spent on the billing issues and making sure that the rates are correct and things like that, so my staff has told me that the eBilling is very easy to use and we're very happy with that."

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## 7. Most valuable features

"The one feature that we found most valuable was the transfer feature. A number of customers will call into our store, and if we can transfer them to customer service, 800 number, it saves our store people a lot of time. So that particular feature was never available before at any of our sites."

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## 8. Non-financial benefits

"Well, specifically we've seen less help desk tickets being opened up by our stores over telecommunication issues. Before, we'd always have a number of stores, maybe up to 20 stores, down a day on DSL, and it's very rare now that any of our Qwest stores will be down. Also, from a stores' perspective, just having faster Internet access to our systems and our production data center; they also can utilize training resources and other customer data resources quicker, which makes their lives much easier in our store environment.

Certainly, simplified billing. Before, we had a number of different vendors servicing those across the country. We've been able to eliminate about 75 percent of those vendors and all the different billing and all that complexity.

Personally, the migration to the Integrated Access product has reduced the number of calls that are escalated to my

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group, which would be more of a level three group. So before, we had to constantly monitor and get escalations for phone lines being down; that has been reduced dramatically by this product. And also, we have one vendor to go to to get solutions for our store. If there is an issue, we know where to go, we know our local team, and we do have a customer service contact that we can go to directly, so that greatly helps not only my staff, but our help desk that opens the tickets up initially."

## 9. Measurable benefits

"We've seen about a 30 percent savings in our long-distance rates from year to year. We've also seen about a 40 to 60-hour per week reduction in the amount of time spent on trouble tickets for all of our retail sites."

## 10. Areas for improvement

"We still struggle in some areas with billing overall with Qwest, partially because we are looking to consolidate billing. For our stores, it's worked well, but we still have many other Qwest bills that were legacy bills from before the project that we wanted to consolidate, too. Also, being able to get local call detail reports. Many times, our stores would like to see detailed reports on local calls going out or coming into their store because of either fraudulent activity or employee activity, and Qwest cannot provide that right now for us--so that is an enhancement request that we have in right now on the IA product."

## 11. Future plans

"We have looked at doing more IP telephony or a hosted VoIP solution there, so there are some other plans that we have currently looked at and we may take advantage of in the next 12 months."

## 12. Recommendations and advice

"The biggest recommendation on a project such as this is to be sure to have a detailed project plan presented so they can show who's going to be working on it, what type of resources are going to be working on it, and how they look at the detail of it. The detail is important because you have to make sure, if you want the project to go as smooth as possible, you have all the details worked out.

The other thing is to make sure you request that they mobilize appropriate staffing internally. So for a larger project, you want to make sure that instead of you spending all your staffing time chasing down a lot of things that they are teaming with you to mobilize their staff to also help with this project and help track down some of the details that always flow during the project."