

# INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interview on behalf of Qwest

Roger McIlmoyle

TLCVision

Director, Technical Services

Last updated: 2008 Aug 11



**Product(s): One Flex: Integrated Access**  
**Industry: Healthcare**

## 1. Business need

"We were in a position to deal with two problems. One, we had a number of sites that over a period of time had gone and found their own phone providers, so we had far too many contracts and far too many phone lines in some centers, and we were opening a whole bunch of new centers. The company had launched an initiative that would see us open 25 centers and we needed to find a vendor to handle both scenarios--transfer from old to new and an entirely new environment. We ended up looking at our current vendor and it wasn't there, so our goal was to find a provider through which we could literally provide an address, a date, and have our phone and Internet installed."

## 2. Evaluation & selection

"As I put it to each vendor, I need to be able to phone you, provide an address--to that address, I require an equivalent of a T1 or three-quarters of a T1 of data, eight phone lines if bound onto a single T1, then bound on that T1, and then four separate analog phone lines delivered from a predominant local carrier. I don't want to speak to a local carrier; I want you to handle it all. Then I need to be invoiced centrally in Canada, not the U.S.

We went to several vendors including our current vendor, got a price to accomplish this based on a pilot of five and an eventual expansion to 25 sites, evaluated the pricing, and through that quoting process, essentially I viewed that as my likely interaction with the account team. How did they basically deal with me? How did they deal with putting the quote together? How did they present it? How did they work with my team? So to a certain degree, it was formal in the sense I looked for formal quotes, and informal in the sense that I was evaluating their interaction on what I'm sure was, you know, sort of a soft fuzzy spec, not as rigid as some companies would like. Our team's so small that this organization had to not just say, but do the task of becoming part of our team."

## 3. Why Qwest?

"Qwest was the only one that came back and said that they would take care of getting analog lines if that's what I required; they would take care of the Qwest product if that's what was required. I could view them as an extension of my team and they would solve the problem. The other vendors would come back with 'Well, if we're the main vendor for that area, we'll certainly take care of the analog lines, but if not, you'll have to take care--' They had all manner of caveats in terms of what they could and would do. Essentially, my account team at Qwest said 'You know what? I'll do what's required to make this happen', and that's the way it's turned out. They ultimately came in as one of the two lowest prices, but they were the only vendor that was willing to step up and just do what needed to be done; whether or not it was specifically a Qwest product they sold, they would coordinate whatever needed to be coordinated to make it happen--and that's what drove it right there. You know, they were the right price and definitely the right account team."

## 4. The implementation/installation

"The installation went extremely well. It was actually better than I had expected. I knew I was asking a vendor to maybe step slightly out of their box, especially with asking them to coordinate local lines, and the timeline was crazy tight, especially for the first five sites. And basically our telco was [put] in, our Internet was up on time, on the specified date. We didn't have any hitches that we didn't know would show up. Essentially, we did the pilot and there was no question in my mind even after the first site that this had just gone so well, and that's

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basically the way it was communicated to the team. Any new site that comes up, any opportunity to flip to Qwest, we would move.

Essentially, I provided Qwest five addresses for the pilot, five dates, a definition of the product, plus the installation of four analog lines from the regional carrier, and essentially they were to take care of the installation and turn-up of all those lines. And that's what happened. The analog lines were ordered through my Qwest rep. He coordinated the order, coordinated the date, and coordinated the install. So from my perspective, it was seamless."

## 5. Overview of solution

"The full Qwest solution for us is using the Integrated Access [IA] product to provide a T1 that has between six and eight lines broken out onto an analog 66 block for delivery to an Avaya G350 Media Gateway. The remaining lines in the group of 10, since that's the product we acquired, we use either for potential growth or a second hunt group depending on the local circumstance or for unanticipated fax machines on implementation day as it's turned out on a regular basis. So essentially just future capacity; in terms of the pricing, it made sense to go that route. Most of our sites only have one hunt group; we have a few sites with two hunt groups. We use a small block of static addresses for our Internet because we do a VPN [virtual private network] solution. They all bill centrally to one address in Canada managed by one internal admin resource. All the billing is broken out by site so that we can charge back to the individual sites themselves while still having the visibility of the total."

## 6. Customer service

"The customer service has been incredible. And you know, working with the Qwest reps has just been amazing because they deal with problems quickly, they take them serious, they keep me informed as to what we're doing and why it's happening and what we need to do to resolve it. So that's really when it comes down to the proof is how well you're dealt with after it's going, especially when you get a large number in. I mean, we're at number 33 and counting. We're continuing on down the road here and there's been really no difference in the level of service right from the very first one to the 34th that I'm working on right now. It's consistently the same.

We had one occasion to escalate early on in the implementation of the IA product. I guess Qwest was going through some small bugs or hiccups in the VoIP [voice over Internet Protocol] product itself, so we escalated past the account rep and it was dealt with very well. You know, I ended up with a senior executive explaining exactly what was going on. He was very frank about what problem they were having and what they were doing to resolve it. He made no attempt to fluff it off as some minor thing; he took it seriously and it made me feel like we were partners in the problem. And once they came to an understanding of what the problem was and how they were resolving it, he got back to me and let me know. Everybody has problems, but it's nice to know that they're acknowledged and you get the truth."

## 7. Experience with Qwest Control®

"Theresa and my primary phone administrator are the people that predominantly use Qwest Control. The person that uses it most is actually our telephone administrator for keeping track of the open tickets. She knows that if she puts a ticket in, she knows which ones are open, which ones are closed, which ones are being followed up on, and she uses it quite a lot."

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## 8. Most valuable features

"The feature that I personally find a big advantage, which was the reason we looked for an integration access product--our offices are small. Eight to 10 people. It's pretty hard to justify a T1 of data for eight to 10 people. I mean, let's be realistic--you could get by with a DSL service, but you don't get the quality of support or the consistency of performance on DSL type products. So I wanted a T1 product for the data side, so I needed to find something that would return value. And the way to do that was to be able to share that T1 with my voice because, as you can appreciate, you wouldn't put in a whole bunch of lines for a few people."

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## 9. Non-financial benefits

"In terms of an enabler for us, the Qwest IA product has allowed us to have access to a business class T1 for our data, which dramatically affects us because we're a medical practice. I mean, when you have a patient standing in front of you, you need to get their information now, and so it needs to be a business class service.

Non-hard ROI is having one contact to cover all of the U.S. In the past, we had three and it's just brutal because you don't have a consistent understanding amongst various different account reps, the churn that happens when you have three different vendors. So the biggest bang is one point of contact. I can phone and the problem will be taken care of and there is a history there. As you open more and more sites, you get closer as a working team and things like forgetting to order calling party disconnect the other person catches because you've seen it before, you've done it before; you did it in the East Coast, now you're in the West Coast, where in the past that'd be a different vendor.

From the end-user community, especially the sites that have moved or we replaced their circuits--from their perspective, once it went in, it doesn't go down. I mean, I have sites at this point that we have not lost connectivity for a year; they just don't go down--which isn't something we had before."

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## 10. Measurable benefits

"The measurable benefits we've achieved are most readily visible in sites that we converted from prior services to Qwest. We received about a 45 percent savings. Times 33, that adds up very, very quickly. I mean, at one point the head office was fairly convinced that they weren't being billed, the drop was so dramatic in terms of our telecom and data costs. We achieved our projected ROI within eight months rather than a year. It was just huge. And that was just simply because we went with the [Qwest] LD [long distance], the IA all bundled into one package. It just reduced the costs so dramatically. As it turned out, the costs we were paying for the lines for a typical office of eight to 10 people and the costs that we were paying for our data package from our prior vendors for the same size office, the IA product came in with about a 45 to 50 percent savings depending on the site. The way we sold it internally was 'Take your pick; you're either getting the voice free or the data free, but either way, it's about half the price'--and we end up with business class data circuits instead of, the way I look at DSL products, home class service.

Secondary ROIs, implementing before, we would be working with a multitude of vendors and it would just chew up staff time. So I would almost have to dedicate somebody to just stick handling the telecom turn-up side, where now it literally comes down to sending an e-mail to my account rep and saying 'Here's the date that we're going to open this site; standard package. Let me know if there's any issues.' And the next e-mail is confirming install dates. I mean, you can't use any less staff time than that. I've been able to avoid hiring somebody because it's taking less time to administer, less time to install, and less support ongoing. And we've just grown to trust it--the product will be there."

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## 11. Areas for improvement

"They can improve on their invoicing, particularly because we're a Canadian head office where 99 percent of our sites are in the U.S. Without exception, every time we open a site, there's always difficulty getting the first invoices routed properly because of Canadian postal codes not being digits. That's no stranger to us, and no telecom vendor's actually nailed that one yet."

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## 12. Future plans

"We're continuing to roll it out with all new sites or any sites that go through a major renovation. That's the focus for the next six months. Depending on our workload internally, we will convert some existing sites off of one vendor in particular, but where we hope to be a year from now is slightly over 100 sites.

The next project--and we've really only started talking about it conceptually--is we manage our own VPN network, and back in 2004 we made the decision to self manage for three to four years and then start to seek out a vendor at that point to take on our site-to-site networking, and we're just starting discussions in what that might look like."

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## 13. Recommendations and advice

"If I were to sit down and talk to a peer about moving to an integrated access product, essentially the key things I'd have in my mind to pass on is timing; being realistic about how quickly you can roll a product out. To be realistic about what type of local contact you need. In sites where we've used an administrative person to be our local contact it has not gone as well as somebody that understands the value of having the service going on time without any glitches. So you don't want to underestimate that part. You want to be realistic about the amount of voice traffic versus data traffic that you can push across the link. So those would be the three things that we've learned along the way."