

AUDIOCODES CASE STUDY



Customer: American Axle & Manufacturing

Website: www.aam.com

Location: USA

Industry: Manufacturing

Customer Profile:

American Axle is a leading, Tier-One global automotive supplier of driveline and drivetrain systems and related components for light trucks, SUVs, passenger cars, crossover vehicles and commercial vehicles.

Challenges:

- Providing seamless PSTN connectivity for a global Lync deployment
- Enabling smooth migration from legacy PBXs to Lync

Solutions:

- Mediant 1000 media gateway

Benefits:

- Complete PBX replacement using Lync UC combined with AudioCodes gateways
- Cost reductions and increased employee productivity
- Interoperability with Lync and PBXs enables AAM to make a smooth, gradual migration
- Hybrid gateway/SBC platform ensures a future-proof solution

American Axle & Manufacturing

Reliable PSTN connectivity for a global Lync deployment
Global automotive supplier, American Axle & Manufacturing (AAM) selected Microsoft Lync unified communications to replace its global Nortel-based telephony infrastructure. The company deployed AudioCodes Mediant 1000 media gateways to provide reliable and seamless connectivity between Lync, the legacy PBXs and the PSTN.

Background

Founded in 1994, AAM (www.aam.com) is a leading, Tier-One global automotive supplier of driveline and drivetrain systems and related components for light trucks, SUVs, passenger cars, crossover vehicles and commercial vehicles. The company operates at over 30 locations in 13 different countries.

Challenges

Up until 2010, AAM's telecommunications infrastructure was entirely based on Nortel PBXs, as well as a number of key systems at its smaller locations. With Nortel's bankruptcy and Avaya's subsequent acquisition of Nortel's communications technology, AAM was concerned about the future of its installed platforms and began to look around for an alternative solution that could meet its corporate communications needs.

The team at AAM determined that the time was ripe for a move to a unified communications (UC) platform which could offer the company's employees additional productivity-boosting functionality such as collaboration, voice and video conferencing and screen sharing. After an extensive evaluation of all the leading UC offerings available in the market, AAM selected Microsoft Lync. "Microsoft Lync offered us the greatest promise for a new generation of unified communications at American Axle," explained Jeff Bryngelson, Global Manager of Networks and Communications at AAM.

With the choice of UC platform settled, AAM now began to investigate suitable technology partners that would be needed to complement the core Lync solution. One area that needed particular attention was connectivity between Lync and the existing voice infrastructure. In a company as large and geographically distributed as AAM, there would be no avoiding a cutover period during which both systems would be operating in tandem as users were migrated from one to the other. Therefore the company needed a reliable solution to ensure that its employees could maintain uninterrupted, high quality voice communications throughout the migration process and beyond.

The Mediant 1000 offered reliable connectivity with the PSTN as well as enabling direct voice communications between Lync and AAM's existing infrastructure.

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Jeff Bryngelson, Global Manager of Networks and Communications at AAM

Solution

At this point AAM decided that a limited proof of concept (PoC) trial would be the best way of determining the most suitable partners for the global Lync deployment and ensuring its success. Jeff Bryngelson and his team identified AudioCodes Mediant 1000 hybrid media gateway/session border controller platforms as a critical element for the solution. With their field-proven PBX interoperability and fully certified Lync compatibility, the Mediant 1000 offered reliable connectivity with the PSTN as well as enabling direct voice communications between Lync and AAM's existing infrastructure. The Mediant 1000 can also function as a session border controller (SBC) providing seamless SIP trunk connectivity when needed in the future.

With the PoC successfully completed, AAM began the global deployment, starting with replacing the smaller sites that were using key systems. At those sites, the key systems were entirely replaced using Lync as the desktop UC tool and an AudioCodes Mediant 1000 to handle local PSTN interconnectivity via a T1 interface.

The next phase involved migrating the larger sites that were running Nortel's PBXs. Because of the added complexity at these sites, AAM gradually replaced its PBXs on a region by region basis. After a process lasting two-and-a-half years, the company's entire communications infrastructure will have been replaced by the end of 2015 with a completely Lync-based environment with AudioCodes Mediant 1000 gateways handling all PSTN connections.





Results

AAM's move to Lync has been a resounding success. Lync's advanced unified communications functionality means increased collaboration, desktop sharing and audio and video conferencing, both internally and externally with suppliers and customers.

There have been concrete bottom-line cost savings as well. One outstanding example of this is a significant reduction in audio conferencing expenses. The Lync/AudioCodes solution is averaging a 68% reduction in monthly expense alone.

"Every time I sit in a meeting and talk about Microsoft Lync and try to get feedback, the message I get again and again is 'I love Lync!'" said Jeff Bryngelson. "No one wants to go back to their old desk phones; they want to use the new modes of communication that this environment has enabled."

"AudioCodes gateways were a key factor in the success of our migration to Lync and have ensured our PSTN connections have maintained their reliability and voice quality", he continued. "Looking to the future, we believe that the Mediant 1000's capacity to function as a session border controller will prove invaluable as we look to adopt SIP trunking as a cost-effective replacement for our T1 connections."

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Jeff Bryngelson, Global Manager of Networks and Communications at AAM

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