



# CONNECT

Connect Telephone &  
Computer Group

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## VOIP move over, it's time for a new buzzword, Unified Communications

Technology moves at a rapid pace, it seems like just yesterday VOIP (voice over IP) was all the talk. While most of us were trying to decide if it made sense to upgrade, along came IP telephony (this is a system where we actually connect to the phones using IP, not old style digital). Now that we are starting to see that come into the mainstream, a new name enters into the fold, Unified Communications (UC). UC utilizes IP telephony to truly integrate all of your communications into one platform. We are not just talking about running voice and data over the same network anymore.

What UC does is provide true collaboration tools to allow businesses the ability to become more effective through the deployment of technology. Sounds Expensive! The great thing is that if your telecommunications vendor is approaching it right, it actually costs less. The premise

is that we start with a robust IP infrastructure (switches, routers, and cable), and then overlay services such as voice, video and collaboration when the time it right. Then as your business processes change, the system



can grow, contract, or change to meet the changing environment.

But, really, what is the difference? With UC, we not only talk about voice, video, and collaboration, but these become real world tools that are as easy

to set up as a phone call. What if we had a remote office in Missoula, and we want to collaborate with employees or customers? Today we have two choices, we can drive there, or we email a document and call them on the phone. That can work, but the drawback is we cannot ensure we are all on the same page, literally or figuratively. With the enhancement of video and collaboration tools, now we can see the other people and share the same document and all changes as if we were in the same room. Unified communications is all about unleashing the power of the network to connect all your employees at all times.

There is no doubt that UC is the future, so make sure when it comes time to purchase a new system that it is true IP telephony, because UC does not work on old style systems.

### Inside this issue:

|                                           |   |
|-------------------------------------------|---|
| Connect offers hosted IT Staff            | 2 |
| Struggling to maintain your vehicle fleet | 2 |
| Cell Phones can be more than just talk    | 2 |
| How to budget for Technology              | 3 |
| Connect receives major awards             | 3 |
| Connect launches application training     | 4 |

### New Certifications

(to continue to provide the most certified technicians in the region, our employees constantly train to stay at the top)

- Randy Begger achieves Cisco Voice Systems Engineer
- Ben Boldt achieves Cisco Unity Design Specialist
- Aaron Berkram achieves Microsoft MCSE Certification
- Brian O'loughlin achieves Cisco Voice Systems Field Engineer
- Loren Peterson achieves A+ certification
- Clint Croft achieves A+ certification
- Andy Wilson achieves Siemon Certified Designer / Installer
- Mike Krueger achieves Siemon Certified Designer / Installer
- Brent Parks achieves Cisco Project Manager certification.
- Matt Duray achieves Cisco Account Manager Certification.

## THE POWER TO COMMUNICATE

### Why do companies buy Technology?

We were in a meeting yesterday and a conversation came up about why companies buy technology. In the old days it was easier, because companies bought technology to enhance a certain process. If a company was getting too many messages for the receptionist to keep up with, they looked at voicemail. If the typing was overwhelming, the company would look at putting in a word processor. In the

current time frame, all technology has certain features that are all there inherently. We assume that by adding this technology, we just need to replace the old technology with similar features and functionality.

There are two holes in this theory:

1. Our business processes have changed since the last upgrade of this technology

2. Do our employees understand how to use the new technology?

What we, at Connect, recommend is that you examine your business processes first and then fit the technology to your process. Then pay careful attention to the training aspect. If we are to get the Return on Investment we expect, it is crucial that our employees understand how to use it.



## Connect offers Hosted IT staff

Connect Telephone & Computer Group, an industry leader in business communications, announced today that the company launched its new Data Gold Seal Partner Program. The innovative strategic partnership offers companies complete outsourcing of a full service IT department. It covers all of the aspects of an organization's technology that are needed to grow the business and provide the necessary solutions so it can focus on its core competencies. Many of these solutions have the ability to increase a company's profitability and give them a competitive advantage in their marketplace.

"Our Data Gold Seal Partner Program addresses several layers of the IT component that are typically not addressed by our competitors or by an in-house IT professional," said Matt Duray, president of Connect Telephone & Computer Group. "We offer our customers a world class help desk, where our certified techni-

cians can take control of a user's PC remotely to quickly handle day-to-day issues. In addition, Connect Telephone & Computer Group provides onsite break-fix support, so that any problems that cannot be handled by the help desk will be resolved at the customer location. We also guarantee our response times based on the severity of the issue."

Customers that take advantage of this unique partner program receive a number of services from Connect Telephone & Computer Group including routine maintenance on a scheduled basis to make sure all software is up to date, ongoing software patches and upgrades, and regular analysis of the health of a network by monitoring event and error logs as well as physical inspection of the core of the network. Furthermore, the company offers security and disaster recover planning. In this component, Connect Telephone

& Computer Group interviews management to identify who should have access to the network and when. Through this process they uncover procedures that should be followed in the event of a natural disaster. The company then publishes, implements, and audits the plan. The partner program also includes valuable training at their offices on industry standard software by certified trainers. Connect Telephone & Computer Group gives their customers the use of their state-of-the-art training facilities to bring in their own trainers to train on their critical applications.

"We're so excited about this program and the way



*Not sure how to manage your current IT staff?*

it has been catching on," added Mr. Duray. "I think the reason it is so compelling is that one person, no matter their abilities cannot perform all of these tasks well. We have created a team of professionals who all take on bits and pieces of this service so that they are performed at the utmost efficiency. The best part about this is that the customer can have access to all of our services for less than what it costs to hire a college kid to be their so called IT department."

*"If your fleet operational costs have been increasing due to high fuel prices, this technology will help you control those costs."*

Connect operates a small fleet in excess of 20 vehicles. We, like most small businesses, cannot afford to hire a person to manage the fleet. We do understand that proper management of the vehicles will lead to longevity, better fuel economy, as well as minimized downtime. Wouldn't it be great if we could have a computer in the vehicles that would transmit fuel economy, engine problems, and maintenance

indicators to our computers at the office?

Another struggle is when a client calls in need of emergency service and we have to call technicians on their cell phones to determine where they are. Wouldn't it be nice if we could look on our computer screen and see where all of our vehicles are and how long they have been there? This will give us the power to best dispatch our tech-

nicians to provide a higher level of service to our clients.

If your fleet operation costs have been increasing due to high fuel prices, this technology will help you control those costs.

This technology has been available for the large firms for many years, but the technology has finally become affordable for the small fleets. Give us a call if you would like more details.

## Cell phones can be more than just talk



Call us to see how mobile wireless devices can help you increase your profitability and give you a competitive advantage.

I don't know if you have seen the new commercials for the cellular telephone companies, but it appears that they are trying to drop the stigma that they are "phone" companies and migrating to "wireless" companies. This reminds me of the story when the railroad thought they were in the railroad industry, not in the transportation industry. We now see how their environment has changed by not

recognizing the trends in their industry.

I think the reason that the "wireless" companies are making such a dynamic shift is because they do not want to be the next railroad.

Most of us look at our cell phone and wonder "why would I ever need internet access from a wireless handheld device (to some of us this device is actually

still referred to as a cellular telephone)?"

I agree that we maybe do not need internet access to surf, but this may actually become a useful business tool by tying us to our corporate network using the internet as a portal. Imagine if all of our reps in the field could be connected for all communications (UC) all of time, wherever they were.

## How can I get my arms around my technology budget?

Technology is a rapidly changing field. We have all heard the comments about how, "as soon as I purchase the technology it is outdated." This cliché is not funny, especially if this money is coming out of your pocket.

We, at Connect, became equally frustrated with this concept and went to work, on behalf of our clients, to try and figure out a way to purchase technology and keep it current for the entire life of that system within your business.

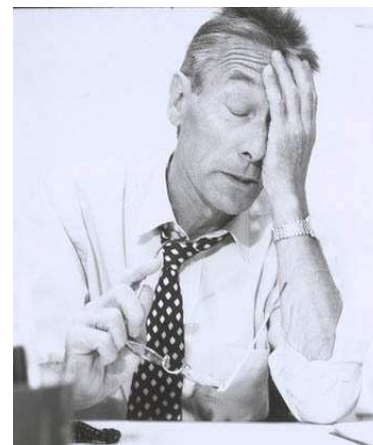
Some people say, it's not that important, why does it need to be current? Well, if we look at the reason we purchased it to

begin with, we were expecting some return on that investment. If the technology becomes outdated, it cannot keep up with the changes in every business. For example, an attorney firm that purchased a phone system 7 years ago could really benefit from an upgraded software that would give them the ability to track incoming and outgoing calls by client. This would give the attorneys the ability to spend more time on billable aspects of their business rather than on paperwork.

If a sales firm wants their reps to be connected even when out in the field, upgrades may allow

their current system to do this without replacing the entire works.

With C-TAP (Current Technology Assurance Plan), Connect can give our customers an exact budget that includes all of the technology as well as the updates, ongoing training and service to ensure that a system installed today is as current as one installed 5 years from now. With this program, companies can keep their technology longer, avoid price increases from vendors and manufacturers, as well as ensure that the technology is always doing what it needs to be doing, not what it did 5 years ago.



*Are you tired of guessing how much your technology costs to own, operate and maintain?*

## Connect recognized nationally for Achievements

Connect Telephone & Computer Group, a leader in business communications, announced today that the company received two of Technology Assurance Group's top awards at the association's 2007 National Convention held in San Diego in March. Technology Assurance Group (TAG), a national organization of independently owned telecommunication companies representing over \$350 million in products and services, selected Connect Telephone & Computer Group as the winner of the "Sales Performance Award" and "Bronze Circle Award" for exceptional economic performance and superior customer satisfaction.

The distinguished awards are based on overall financial performance, customer satisfaction, and the ability to provide companies with cost effective and state-of-the-art communication solutions. "Connect Telephone & Computer Group was recognized as one of the truly great companies in our industry," said Dale Johnson,

president of Technology Assurance Group. "The company's sophisticated management team, led by its owner Matt Duray, achieved significant success in an industry known for rapid change. By staying at the forefront of the latest trends in technology, they helped their customers improve productivity, increase profitability, and give them a competitive advantage."

Matt Duray of Connect Telephone & Computer Group accepted the award for the company. "These awards illustrate our commitment to complete customer satisfaction," said Mr. Duray. "It is a direct result of our company properly implementing better business practices, building long lasting relationships with all of our customers, educating our team of professionals and empowering them to share their knowledge, and enhancing our performance on a daily basis. We're extremely proud of this achievement and we're striving to exceed this accomplishment in 2007."

Technology Assurance Group, LLC (TAG) is a national organization of leading independently owned telecommunications companies. TAG provides its members with the competitive advantages necessary to achieve a dominant position in their marketplace. Members benefit from programs including strategic partnerships with communication solution providers, best business and management practices, and advanced sales training programs. TAG's mission is to leverage its members' combined economic power, to increase their sales and profit margins, and to bring advanced technology to the marketplace. For more information on TAG, please call 858-673-5800 or visit [www.tagnational.com](http://www.tagnational.com)



Brent Parks of Connect (middle) is on hand to accept the awards on behalf of Connect Telephone & Computer Group.





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## *THE **POWER** TO COMMUNICATE*

### **Connect rolls out application training while expanding current training facilities**

After we have all been through technology deployments, we wonder how we ever got along without them. Think about the days before personal computers and cell phones. We actually had to stop by a pay phone and make a call because someone left their phone number on the screen of our pager, or we had to re-type a page because of an error in a document. Those days are long gone. Most people have one cell phone, if not more. Most desks in corporate America have a PC with some software on it.

I think the thing that is easy to predict is that as technology evolves we will continue to see more and more applications rolled out to more differing interfaces, such as PC's, phones, kiosks, etc.

This presents a huge learning curve for the world. As we

continue to roll out more applications to our staff, how are they going to be able to learn



how to use them?

Technology is deployed to enhance business processes, right? When we change a process within our organizations, we know that we must train our

staff on how to use those processes.

Well, technology is the same way. We not only need to provide our workforce with the technology hardware

and software, but to get the most bang for our buck we need to make sure that existing staff knows how to use it and that new staff coming aboard has an avenue to learn our systems.

Connect has just invested \$40,000 into our training facility. We boast a large meeting room that can accommodate up to 40 people, or 20 with computers. We have scheduled classes that teach industry standard applications to your staff: Word, Excel, Outlook, Quick-books, etc.

In addition to that, we can provide the facility and computers to allow you to bring in your trainer on your critical applications and train your staff at our location.

This allows your staff to be out of the office in a training environment, free from the distractions that being at the office encourages. This will give your staff the tools and knowledge they need to be successful at their positions. If you would like more information on these services, call, click or drop by today.