



INDUSTRY

Based in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, Versature provides innovative business communications solutions throughout Canada - including major media centers in the cities of Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver, and Quebec City - to small- and medium-sized enterprises that are ready to take advantage of VoIP's advanced capabilities.

Businesses as small as 1 person and as large as 250 members are using Versature to save money on their telecommunications services, while retaining the flexibility they need to grow. "Working within our sister company, TechSupport.ca, we saw many of our clients having the kinds of technical difficulties and frustration that entrepreneurs face every day in an environment where telephony solutions are geared to big business. With 13 years of business experience at TechSupport and a wealth of technology talent to draw on, we saw an opportunity to bring VOIP to the businesses that need it most, with a flexible, hosted solution that avoids the costs and headaches of setting up a traditional phone system." States Adam Sherman, Chief Technology Officer of Versature.

To focus exclusively on VOIP, Versature was founded as a new company, dedicated to providing Internet telephony solutions that add value without adding overhead. Versature still works closely with Techsupport, which helps small- to medium-sized enterprises use computers, networks, phones, faxes and software to make business simpler, more professional, and less costly.

CommuniGate Pro at Versature— Hosted Unified Communications for Small Businesses

CHALLENGE

When Versature first entered the VoIP business, they were using Asterisk to build PBX systems on a customized Linux distribution, delivering a premise-based system offering. Versature quickly realized that using this highly customized and complex Asterisk-Linux model would not allow them to standardize their offering and generate value-added revenue for enhanced services without a heavily service-based staff. Maintaining and modifying customer configurations became a time-consuming task, builds were not easily repeatable, and in many cases onsite visits and lengthy negotiations of time and materials contracts were required even for basic service needs. Versature also recognized that what they really needed was a platform foundation built on a standards-based protocol for VoIP, such as SIP and a platform that can scale with their growing needs.

Versature's decision to move completely to a Hosted PBX model was driven by business needs to deliver a rich and manageable IP PBX platform which could grow with the customer base, and which could virtualize a customized PBX environment for many different customers within a single infrastructure. As they were evaluating many products, the team kept coming back to the unique CommuniGate Pro platform, where SIP and VoIP are "just another standards-based protocol" which allows customers a wide choice of IP phones, softphones, and instant-messaging clients.

SOLUTION

Working with CommuniGate Systems, Versature was able to quickly implement a CommuniGate Pro ver5 core server solution which was "cluster-ready". For scalability and 99.999% uptime, Versature decided to add nodes to form an all active Dynamic Cluster with SIP Farm Specialization. The Versature Dynamic Cluster uses Sun Solaris x86 with an NFS volume for the Shared File System.

The Versature environment provides a complete suite of IP PBX services in a hosted model for virtualized domains with delegated administration, with 10+ additional domains being added each month. Services offered include voicemail and auto-attendant, self-service, webmail access to voicemail, multiparty conference calling, and secure instant messaging.

SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

The CommuniGate Pro Dynamic Cluster SIP Farm currently runs on Sun Solaris 10 x86 using AMD x86 processor-based servers, at 2.2 Ghz with two gigabytes of RAM. The Dynamic Cluster utilizes data sharing with a storage array serving NFS, and Versature can expand the system with the "Just Add Nodes" feature, for a zero down time system expansion. The "Rolling Updates" feature allows upgrades to occur with no user downtime. While Versature has chosen to run their hosted PBX on Solaris, CommuniGate Pro supports all major Unix, Linux, Windows, OSX, and BSD platforms giving them a choice to change in the future and/or use a mixed environment in their cluster configuration as they add more nodes according to their needs.

BENEFITS

Versature quickly learned that with CommuniGate Pro, they could also satisfy many other customer needs. While initially intending to offer only a Hosted PBX, Versature recognized that customers were regularly asking for additional hosted services such as email, collaboration and calendaring, and hosted Exchange-like environments for use with Outlook. All of these features were present already in the CommuniGate Pro cluster, and each class of service could be granularly enabled for each domain and even each account. Personalization of the webmail portal for every customer including SSL certificates and look-and-feel provided Versature with a complete Hosted IP Communications platform which in every way looked and felt like an in-house system, complete with custom colors and logos.

"CommuniGate Pro has literally been a piece of cake to configure and maintain. We look forward to the new versions coming out with more enhanced VoIP applications which will allow us to create even more revenue streams for our company." concludes Sherman.



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