



## Global Supply Chain Management Company Helps Efficiency with Unified Communications

### Overview

**Country or Region:** United States

**Industry:** Professional services

### Customer Profile

NSPI is a Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner based in Roswell, Georgia. Founded in 1986, NSPI provides systems and network integration, managed services, and consulting.

### Business Situation

CAB, a manufacturer of industrial products, was interested in deploying a voice over IP (VoIP) solution that could help to reduce costs and speed communication between global employees and customers.

### Solution

NSPI worked with CAB to design and deploy a unified communications solution built on Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 and Microsoft Exchange Server 2007.

### Benefits

- Transitioned to VoIP quickly and easily
- Accelerated productivity
- Reduced expenses
- Improved customer service

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*Terri Jondahl, Chief Executive Officer, CAB*

NSPI uses its extensive engineering expertise to deliver voice, data, and video communications solutions and consulting services. In 2007, NSPI worked with the industrial products company CAB to replace its Private Branch Exchange system with a unified communications solution built on Microsoft® Office Communications Server 2007 and Microsoft Exchange Server 2007. Unlike other telephony systems, the solution provides voice over IP, instant messaging, Web-based conferencing, and a single inbox for voice and e-mail messages. In addition, employees can use presence information to immediately access contact information for other employees or to see employees’ availability. Designed and deployed in less than two months, the new system facilitates cost and productivity savings and provides for greater communication with customers and offices in multiple countries.



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Tim Roe, Director of Sales and Marketing,  
NSPI

## **Situation**

Based in Roswell, Georgia, Network Services Plus, Inc. (NSPI) specializes in systems and network integration and services. A Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner that has been in business for more than 21 years, NSPI is recognized by customers for its portfolio of technology, end-to-end services, and experience in the industry. Companies of all sizes turn to NSPI to provide comprehensive solutions, hosted environments, and supplemental services to assist IT departments.

“The length of time we’ve been in business and the experience we offer are certainly two of our strengths, but our people are even more important,” says Tim Roe, Director of Sales and Marketing at NSPI. “We are an engineering-based company with more than 55 employees, and two-thirds of them are certified engineers in the technologies they support. We handle technology implementations from the workstation to the server computer, as well as global wide area networks.”

In March 2007, Microsoft Gold Certified Partner TwinEngines contacted NSPI to help implement the infrastructure to support a custom supply-chain solution that TwinEngines had developed for CAB Incorporated, a manufacturer of wind-tower components, steel-pipe flanges, and industrial castings and forgings. NSPI began working with TwinEngines on the deployment and, in the process, learned that CAB was interested in deploying voice over IP (VoIP).

As a company that has numerous locations around the world—including in the United States, China, India, South Africa, and South Korea—CAB could greatly benefit from the reduced phone costs that VoIP makes possible. In addition, because the company was continuing to grow, CAB needed either to continue to invest in its Samsung Prostar

Private Branch Exchange (PBX) system or to begin to build on the technology of the future: VoIP.

“When the need for VoIP was uncovered, NSPI was the logical partner for TwinEngines to refer the project to,” says Mark Munson, Vice-President of Business Development for TwinEngines. “Because of its early involvement with Microsoft on Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007, NSPI brought an understanding of VoIP to bear that other Microsoft partners had not yet developed.”

In March 2007 Office Communications Server 2007 was not yet available, so NSPI presented alternative VoIP solutions. However, none of these products provided the level of integrated functionality or the productivity gains that CAB sought.

## **Solution**

NSPI kept in close contact with Microsoft and in September 2007 deployed a pre-release version of Office Communications Server 2007 within its own organization. By early October 2007, NSPI felt confident in the technology and contacted CAB.

“When NSPI told me about Office Communications Server 2007, I knew it was the direction we needed to go,” says Terri Jondahl, Chief Executive Officer at CAB. “The costs savings we could realize by using VoIP would be a big benefit, but the real reason behind our decision was to provide a solution that could integrate all of our communications.”

Elaborating on the strengths of the solution, Roe explains, “Office Communications Server 2007 is more than just a phone system. It works with Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 to integrate telephony, instant messaging, e-mail, voice mail, Web conferencing, and features like presence—which give instant

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Terri Jondahl, Chief Executive Officer, CAB

insight into other employees' availability. Users can access features like presence from any product in the 2007 Microsoft Office system. There are very few solutions today that can affect individuals' productivity like this solution does, and it also provides for new levels of mobility. For a company like CAB, mobility is particularly important because users can access the same functionality whether they are in South Africa or in Georgia.”

In October 2007, Doug Gallant, Chief Technology Officer from NSPI, worked with three employees at CAB to implement the unified communications solution. CAB initially wanted the solution to work alongside the company's PBX system. However, because of the stability of Office Communications Server 2007, CAB decided instead to use it to replace the PBX system. The final solution design included 10 HP ProLiant DL380 G5 server computers running the Windows Server® 2003 Enterprise Edition operating system. Two of the server computers run Exchange Server 2007 Enterprise Edition, and five of the systems run Office Communications Server 2007. In addition, one server computer runs Microsoft SQL Server® 2005 database software to store remote office data and two systems run the Active Directory® service to support enterprise domain controllers.

In December 2007, the team deployed the solution to all CAB employees at corporate headquarters. Because the people there were already using Microsoft Office Professional 2007, the team simply deployed Microsoft Office Communicator 2007 on every workstation and portable computer.

Employees were also given their choice of phone devices: the LG-Nortel IP Phone 8540 or Polycom CX700 IP phone, which resemble standard desktop phones; the LG-Nortel USB Phone 8501 or Polycom CX400 cordless

phone; or the LG-Nortel Wireless Headset 8502 or Jabra GN9330 USB headset.

In January 2008, the team continued its corporate rollout of the solution at a facility in Texas, and installed two Microsoft RoundTable™ conferencing and collaboration devices: one at the corporate headquarters and one at the facility in Texas. The RoundTable device captures a panoramic video of everyone sitting in the conference room. Any remote participants who use a webcam and Office Communicator 2007 or Microsoft Office Live Meeting (2007) can see images of all of the people in the conference room on their workstation. If remote participants also have a RoundTable device, their images appear on the computers of the other participants.

### **Benefits**

By deploying Office Communications Server 2007 and Exchange Server 2007, NSPI can help companies such as CAB to easily incorporate the benefits of unified communications into Microsoft Office system environments. The increased levels of communication and mobility that the solution makes possible can cut costs and improve productivity and customer service.

### **Transitioned to VoIP Quickly and Easily**

After the infrastructure was in place, it took the team only one week to roll out the solution to CAB employees in Georgia, and less than one week to do so for the employees in Texas. “The short implementation time frame is a testament to the project management skills of NSPI and CAB,” notes Jondahl. “The whole transition to Office Communications Server 2007 was very, very smooth and surprisingly easy. NSPI really prepared effectively in advance. Usually, when you make a change this big, you experience some pain, but we haven't had any. We've only benefited by deploying this solution.”

In addition, employees and IT personnel at CAB did not require formal training. "That's another great aspect of Office Communications Server 2007," notes Roe. "Product training can be done during the deployment process. People learn how to manage and use the solution very quickly."

### **Accelerated Productivity**

Employees have been able to eliminate the inefficiencies from traditional forms of communication. "Office Communications Server 2007 reaches in and uses the information that companies already have in the Active Directory and automatically extends that contact information across the enterprise," explains Roe. "As a result, customers can quickly see anyone's contact information across the organization by clicking a presence icon. Then, with one more click they can contact the person by phone, instant message, or e-mail. This ability is a natural extension of all of the communication tools that people are already used to."

Scheduling conference calls is also easier. "Because we have people in locations around the world, we used to have to wait until everyone was in an office to conduct a conference call, and calls were usually very early in the morning for some of us," explains Jondahl. "Office Communications Server 2007 makes it possible to participate in a conference from any location that has Internet access."

And because employees can manage communications from their mobile computers, they can also opt to take calls outside of normal business hours. "When I'm on my mobile computer at night and I want to accept a call that comes in on my office line, I simply redirect the call to my mobile phone or home phone, and the caller is none the wiser," notes Jondahl.

Another aspect of the solution that CAB likes is the unified inbox. "Office Communications Server 2007 and Exchange Server 2007 give us the tools to improve every aspect of our communications," Jondahl says. "When you're used to working in e-mail all of the time, it's easy to forget to check voice mail or to return phone calls. By having all of our messages in our inboxes, we communicate better, which helps us to accomplish more."

### **Reduced Expenses**

CAB expects that the cost of the new solution will be quickly offset by savings in several areas. In the past, whenever a change needed to be made to the PBX system, CAB had to engage an outside phone company. Today, the company's IT department maintains the unified communications solution and can easily make required changes. "By deploying Office Communications Server 2007, we'll be able to reduce telephone support costs," says Jondahl. "We also expect to minimize travel and the cost of international communications. IP phones are also very inexpensive compared with PBX phones."

An unexpected benefit of the solution is that CAB no longer has a person answer the company's main telephone lines. "One thing about Office Communications Server 2007 is that the voice recognition system is absolutely phenomenal," Jondahl explains. "Today our main lines go into an auto-attendant, because the system is amazingly smooth."

### **Improved Customer Service**

The increased flexibility made possible by Office Communications Server 2007 also helps to boost customer service. "We used to be concerned about trying to have a team all located in one place so that our people could properly handle incoming calls," says Jondahl. "With Office Communications Server 2007, we can transfer calls seamlessly to any

## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information by using the World Wide Web, go to: [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

For more information about NSPI products and services, call (800) 783-3871 or visit the Web site at: [www.nspi.com](http://www.nspi.com)

For more information about TwinEngines products and services, call (404) 522-4262 or visit the Web site at: [www.twinengines.com](http://www.twinengines.com)

For more information about CAB products and services, call (800) 241-7311 or visit the Web site at: [www.cabinc.com](http://www.cabinc.com)

employee at any location. Also, we no longer have to give out multiple numbers, because one number can be used to reach us regardless of where we're at."

In the future, CAB hopes to use the federation feature to further boost customer service levels—just like NSPI does with CAB today. With federation, companies are able to use Office Communications Server 2007 to share presence information with one another or to participate in Web conferences. "By federating with CAB, we do not have to dial up someone the old-fashioned way and hope to catch that person at his or her desk," Roe explains. "We can instantly see whether the person is available to talk."

By federating with NSPI, CAB can test the feature before offering it as an option to its own customers. "We want to be able to use our unified communications system to better connect our global employees with our customers," concludes Jondahl. "We're building the foundation for this new vision, and I think eventually this level of communication will be ubiquitous."

## Microsoft Office System

The Microsoft Office system is the business world's chosen environment for information work, providing the programs, servers, and services that help you succeed by transforming information into impact.

For more information about the Microsoft Office system, go to: [www.microsoft.com/office](http://www.microsoft.com/office)

### Software and Services

- Microsoft Office
  - Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007
  - Microsoft Office Communicator 2007
- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
  - Windows Server 2003 Standard Edition
  - Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 Enterprise Edition
  - Microsoft SQL Server 2005
- Technologies
  - Active Directory

### Hardware

- HP ProLiant DL380 G5 server computer
- Jabra GN9330 USB headset
- LG-Nortel IP Phone 8540
- LG-Nortel USB Phone 8501
- LG-Nortel Wireless Headset 8502
- Microsoft RoundTable
- Polycom CX400 cordless phone
- Polycom CX700 IP phone

### Partners

- NSPI
- TwinEngines