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Autor: Metha, Kam

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INTERNATIONAL VOICE PRIVATE NETWORK (IVPN)

THE ADVANTAGE IVPN OFFERS TO FIRMS

Why does a firm which has international activities need an International Voice Private Network (IVPN)? To phone is, after all, as simple as lifting the handset, dialing a few digits: and you are able to talk to anyone around the world! This is true to a certain extent; however, for firms, small or big, telecommunication in general is becoming a cost factor.

Imagine you are an information technologies (IT) manager of a large multinational company and you are asked to save communication costs. You have the option of stopping the

KAM METHA, BERN

employees making external calls, reducing the number of lines you rent from the Telecom PTT, asking your employees to share lines and/or telephone sets or trying to motivate employees to call at off-peak hours. You will definitely reduce costs with this approach!

Now think of the users. Whether they are your own colleagues or customers, they will definitely feel frustrated at not being able to make use of the telecommunications infrastructure, which has become part of their working environment. In addition, you may not forget time and business losses while waiting to get a free line. If your customer constantly gets a busy line to your help desk or sales department, he may soon be your competitor's customer! Hence, when it comes to reducing costs without compromising for quality or services, life gets a bit more interesting!

The international private network operator

So how do you achieve this and keep everyone happy? Simple: you look for an international private network operator offering you IVPN solutions. As an IT manager of a large international company, you have to invest a lot of time and resources into getting the best deal out of the local Public Telephone Operators (PTOs) in various countries around the globe. But this is not an easy task! Different contracts, different local conditions, different cultures, different legal issues, different quality aspects – different everything! An international private network operator will take this load off your shoulders, since he normally has his own backbone and through the expansion of his network has to deal with other PTTs, so that he can offer you the best seamless solutions: true 'one-stop shopping'.

The offer of AT&T/Unisource (Uniworld)

The EVUA (European VPN Users Association), formed in 1993, was the major driving force for the constitution

of the IVPN service from AT&T/Unisource (Uniworld). This association consists of more than 30 multinationals whose prime goal is to reduce telecommunication costs (approximately 60 % of their budget was in voice services) and promote the liberalization of the European telecommunications market. EVUA selected two potential suppliers for their RFI (Request For Information – the step before requesting an offer): AT&T/Unisource and BT. Their requirements were based on EEC directives stipulating that a private operator could offer voice solution to closed user groups with certain restrictions.

In early 1994, a joint agreement between AT&T and Unisource was made to meet the requirements of EVUA's members and to implement a new IVPN network by the end of 1995 which features consistency throughout the geographical presence of AT&T and Unisource. Their mission is to provide multinational corporations with complete telecommunication solutions and support service, resulting in reduced communication costs with increasing efficiency and flexibility.

Intelligent Network for more efficient services introduction

The AT&T/Unisource IVPN service uses its own Intelligent Network (IN) backbone based on the latest technology available. The objective of IN is to allow the introduction of services independently of equipment vendors, with an emphasis on cost optimization with reduced implementation times. It also provides operators the means with which to efficiently manage their networks. Hence, a comprehensive range of services can be of

ferred and managed centrally as opposed to the present situation, whereby services and management are locally situated in the customer's PBX. Initially, AT&T/Unisource concentrates on offering features which are most commonly required by a majority of their customers; a few of them are listed and explained below:

- Network Remote Access provides access to the network services from remote locations, using authorization and security codes.
- Call Forwarding/Follow Me enables a user to redirect incoming calls to another extension (e.g., you can redirect calls coming to your Swiss office to that of your German office).
- Call Screening restricts numbers and/or countries to which calls can be made.
- Customized announcements; customization of certain network announcements to meet customer needs.
- Call Diversion On Busy/On No Reply; call rerouting to an alternative number in case of 'number busy' or 'no reply'.
- Private Numbering Plan; corporate wide numbering plan which lets you call a particular site (or extension) with the same digits from anywhere on the network.
- Speed Dialing; a short code which replaces the 8- to 10-digit international or national numbers.

Most of these services are familiar to the user – but in his own local environment! IVPN now offers these services on a global scale with centralized management and maintenance.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Bei international tätigen Firmen spielen die Betriebskosten der Telekommunikationsinfrastruktur eine immer wesentlichere Rolle. IT-Manager (IT: Informations-Technologien) solcher Firmen investieren erheblich Zeit und Geld, um mit lokalen Telefonnetzbetreibern verschiedenster Länder die besten Konditionen auszuhandeln, was jedoch keine leichte Aufgabe ist und viel Sachkenntnis erfordert. Betreiber von internationalen privaten Netzwerken (IVPN), zu denen AT&T/Unisource (Uniworld) gehört, übernehmen diese Aufgabe, was dem Kunden den Vorteil bringt, den gesamten Dienst von einem einzigen Anbieter offeriert zu erhalten. Den Ausschlag zur Erstellung eines IVPN-Dienstes gab die EVUA (European VPN Users Association), der über 30 multinationale Firmen angehören, die mit dieser Vereinigung eine Senkung ihrer Kommunikationskosten bezeichnen. Für ihren IVPN-Dienst benutzt AT&T/Unisource (Uniworld) ihr eigenes Intelligent Network Backbone, dank dem neue Netzdienste effizienter eingeführt und verwaltet werden können.

This results in cost reduction for the customer with respect to operation, maintenance, infrastructure and personnel.

In short, there is great excitement and an increasing demand on the market, and this demand must be recognized

professionally! The exciting world of telecommunications brings with it much competition with similar offerings with respect to services and networks, but AT&T/Unisource's offering is a truly global reach with the highest quality and service.

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Kam Metha holds a BSc (Bachelor of Science) Degree in Aeronautical Engineering Science and a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Computing Technology from the U. K. His professional career started at Ericsson in the U. K. and in Sweden as a software development engineer and test project leader. In 1989 he joined Ascom Hasler Ltd. in Berne to set up and lead the test project for delivery of ISDN and CCITT (ITU-T) no 7 functionality for the Swiss PTT's transit network. Having completed this task, he changed to the network management department, where he was involved in the development of a management system for the ITU-T no 7 networks. His role included test project leading, consultancy and technical presentations. In 1994 Kam joined Unisource Business Networks (Switzerland) in Berne as a technical consultant for the EVUA/IVPN project. Presently, he works with Swiss Telecom International as an internal technical consultant to provide acquisition and operational support.