



Managing the Growing Pains of Success

Opportunity

Business owners, how would you handle the communications challenges brought about by this type of growth over a nine-year period?

- Production of your product has increased 38 times
- Growth to almost 30 sales offices and distribution warehouses
- A territory covering thousands of kilometers (miles)

Welcome to St. Petersburg and the headquarter offices of Baltika, Russia's largest beer-producing company. From 1996-2003, production of the company's brewed beverages soared from 27 million liters (just over 7 million gallons) to 1.013 billion liters (267.6 million gallons). To handle this surge in demand, the company added modern technological brewing equipment, as well as additional sales offices and distribution centers — covering 9000 km (5592 mi) and nine time zones.

The surge didn't only affect the company's products. It also put stress on the communications between the company's offices: different telephone networks, different regions, and nine different time zones.

To keep company locations synchronized, the company conducts conferences calls daily between personnel at the distributed branches (distribution, marketing, etc.), while weekly conference calls occur between the general management

Close Up

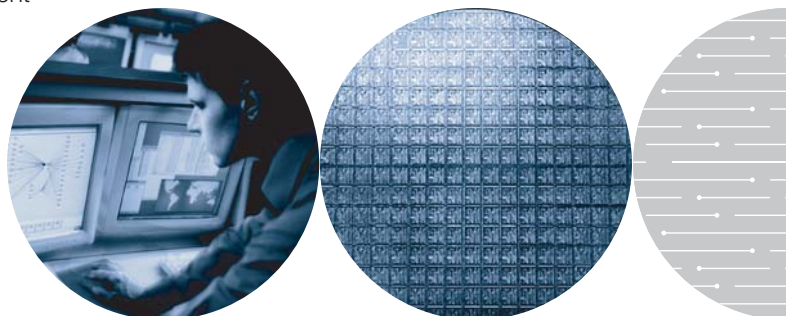
- Existing PBX was impeding necessary daily and weekly conference calls
- The new conferencing system provides improved efficiencies
- Solution is scalable because of the open, standards-based modular architecture

(at headquarters) and the directors of the regional branches. With Baltika's current public branch exchange (PBX), this was a drain on resources. Conferences were difficult to plan and schedule — and someone had to manually dial out to each participant.

But the main problems appeared during the conference calls.

- There was no way of moderating and keeping order in the conference.
- The calls were very noisy because every participant was in full-duplex mode. Therefore, all background noise from all phone sets was transmitted during the conference.
- And when anyone disconnected from the conference, all connected parties would hear busy tones as a result of the caller being disconnected. In order to determine who had dropped, a roll call was held, which interrupted the flow of the conference. And if the dropped party wished to re-enter the conference, it was very difficult to manually dial the dropped party and connect them back to the

Intel in
Communications



conference.

Management decided to use high tech conferencing capabilities to increase efficiencies in this rapidly growing, multisite company.

Solution

To meet these challenges, Baltika contacted a computer telephony solution developer also located in St. Petersburg. Baltika's conferencing issues were solved by a single product: an Assembly conference bridge by Nevo-ASC.

Challenge 1

There was no way of moderating the conference.

The Assembly conference bridge from Nevo-ASC has a conference moderator function. Now, conferences can have an online moderator to keep track of the participants and monitor the noise level of the conference, by utilizing an online interface seen on a standard Windows* desktop computer where he can see the online status of each party.

Challenge 2

The calls were very noisy.

Now the moderator can see on the monitor which participants have a lot of background noise. These phones can be muted, until a participant requests the right to talk. The moderator can also immediately remove unwanted talking and other noise by switching those participants into "listen-only" mode...or disconnecting them from the conference call. By using the voice activity detection (VAD) function of one of the solution's boards, the moderator can see who is currently talking and who is not. And he can noiselessly and instantly change anyone's status (i.e., talking; silent, but has the right to talk; listen-only mode, requesting the right to talk, etc.)

Challenge 3

Dropped calls were difficult to track and participants had difficulty re-entering the call.

When a participant is disconnected, the moderator immediately knows who is it and can return the participant to the conference with a simple mouse click — without interrupting and bothering the whole conference.

Besides solving Baltika's main conferencing challenges, Assembly's other features permit automatic notification and out-dialing, allowing for

flexible planning and fast assembling of conferences. All this and recording, reporting, and other features completely changes the way Baltika communicates between locations...and less service personnel are involved in the process.

Now, the management staff at Baltika can create audio conference bridges, gathering the necessary personnel for meetings regardless of their physical location. And the distances between company offices does not affect their ability to communicate. Whether they use the public switched telephone network (PSTN) or wireless mobile phones anywhere in the world, meetings happen.

Technologies

Baltika first tried to use the built-in conferencing capabilities of its current PBX and different standalone conference bridges. But it was extremely inconvenient. A lot of time was wasted having employees contact each conference participant and even when many of the participants could attend, the background noise made it difficult to conduct business meetings.

Assembly from Nevo-ASC let Baltika implement the functionality that was required. After reviewing the telephone system installed at Baltika's head office, Nevo-ASC worked to enable remote online monitoring and management of the conference bridge by the conference leader and administrator. The system is connected to a Meridian public branch exchange (PBX) via an E-1 link and to the IP network.

The solution is powerful because of the open, standards-based modular architecture of Intel® telecom products. The required conferencing features were programmed on a DCB/320SC conferencing board from Intel, which has the "best conferencing functionality and features and performance available on the market," according to Igor Marokhonov, CEO of Nevo-ASC. These features include tone clamping, echo cancellation, automatic gain control, and coaching.

Because of the size of some conferences, Baltika needed to be able to allow its employees control their own status (i.e., request voice, mute/unmute, vote, adjust volume, etc.). The DTI/301SC digital telephony interface board, also from Intel, provided exactly what was needed as part of the solution by providing them with this capability through tone detection/generation

functionality, enabling connectivity with any type of PBX with ISDN PRI. When needed, Baltika employees can also make several smaller, independent conferences simultaneously.

By using these types of modular building blocks from Intel, if more than 30 conference participants are needed, additional boards (like the DTI/601SC or DM/T1200-4E1 digital telephony interface board, the DCB/960SC for conferencing resources, and the D/320JCT combined media board for voice) could be added.

*Another plus: Installation was completed in **one day**.*

Results

By installing Assembly from Nevo-ASC, Baltika's conference calls foster more efficient multisite communications. Since conferences can be scheduled via the out-dialing feature of Assembly, employees who used to schedule conferences have saved time. Through the various functions of the conferencing boards from Intel, distractions are down to a minimum, so conference attendees can maintain focus on the subject at hand.

Overall, Baltika's intraoffice conferencing capabilities were maximized by taking advantage of the most current technologies and were brought up to telecom industry standards. Management at the head office can now dynamically schedule conference calls. Automatic notification and out-dial collection features are used to soften the time zone difference issue and ensures maximum participation rate. And if participants are unable to participate online, there is a recording feature which lets those participants listen to the conference at another time.

About Nevo-ASC

Nevo-ASC, founded in 1989 in St. Petersburg, Russia, is focused on developing and manufacturing telecommunication equipment, conferencing, and call-logging systems. Since 1997, the company has developed computer telephony solutions and is now a leader of the Russian CT market segment with installations at major Russian government and industry accounts. For more information, visit <http://www.nevo-asc.spb.ru>

About Baltika

Founded in 1990, Baltika is the largest beer producing company in Russia, with over 18% of all Russian beer production (over 1.013 billion liters per year). The company's main office is in St. Petersburg, with four regional offices and distribution departments in 24 cities throughout Russia. For more information, visit <http://www.baltika.ru>

About CompTek

CompTek, a leading Russian distributor for major vendors of telecommunication and networking equipment, is an innovative company that promotes new science-intensive technologies. The company has a wide network of partners: telecom operators, system integrators, ISVs, and resellers in over 100 cities in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). CompTek is an affiliate member of the Intel Communications Alliance. For more information visit <http://www.comptek.ru>

About Intel

Intel, the world's largest chipmaker, is also a leading manufacturer of computer, networking, and telecommunications products. Intel telecom products offer developers, service providers, resellers, and communications system owners what they need to succeed in the world of converged voice and data communications. This includes a broad range of high-performance, open communication building blocks, a global network of solutions providers, and comprehensive support and consulting services. Ranging from silicon to software protocols, boards, middleware, and communications server platforms, these open, high-performance building blocks are available at various levels of integration to meet converged communications needs from the enterprise to the public network. They can enable a broad range of converged Web services including Internet voice browsing, IP-enabled contact centers, voice portals, unified messaging and communications, and more. For more information, visit <http://www.intel.com/design/network/products/telecom/index.htm>.

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1515 Route Ten
Parsippany, NJ 07054
Phone: 1-973-993-3000

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