

## MERGING PHONES, PC

*Application allows firms to update system,  
manage incoming calls just like e-mail*

BY BRENT WILDER  
FOR BUSINESS FIRST

**A** local technology communications firm is offering businesses the opportunity to take control of internal phone systems.

Instead of having to update phone systems every few years through a traditional outsourced vendor, businesses can keep features perpetually up-to-date by running phone lines into an internal computer network using a proprietary software solution, says Eric Kasper, who is the vice president of M technology Services.

Westerville-based M Technology Services, Inc. is the area's reseller and outfitter of software that brings phone calls into a Windows-based platform for PC administration in a Microsoft Outlook-style setting, Kasper says.

The system, which runs off Cambridge, Mass. Software manufacturer Artisoft's TeleVantage 4, is "a different mind-set when it comes to phone systems," Kasper says.

He likens the purchase of a traditional phone system, in which a business purchases a phones-and-all total package from one vendor for a contract period, to the days in which consumers were forced to buy all computer hardware and software from IBM.

"That's kind of the premise behind this, in that your phone system's a computer system with software on it," Kasper explains. The system can be administered by a vendor's proprietary software via the phone lines or, using TeleVantage brought in-house onto company computer hardware, he says.

By purchasing a system through M Technology Services, starting at around \$5,000 for a system with four phone lines and eight phones, businesses receive continual software updates through an additional annual fee and can use any phones they choose, Kasper says. The upshot is that at the end of five years, a system using TeleVantage is running up-to-date software. A traditional services contract, he says, begins losing value as soon as the ink is dry, usually requiring the purchase of a brand-new system to add functionality after the contract expires.

"You could go out if you had to and buy a \$10 phone at Circuit City and stick it on this system, and it'll work," Kasper says.

### Ease of use

The other key point by which M Technology Services markets its TeleVantage package-which includes software installation, a dedicated Windows-based telecommunications server and Intel voice



JANET ADAMS BUSINESS FIRST

Steve Alexander, president of Aire-Flo Corp., can see incoming calls and manage them using a PC-based phone system marketed by M Technology.

### M TECHNOLOGY SERVICES, INC.

**Business:** M Technology Services combines computer, telephone and Internet technologies to help companies improve communications.

**Based:** Westerville  
**CEO:** Shige A. Moroi  
**Area Employees:** 18  
**2002 sales estimate:** \$1.7 million  
**Year founded:** 1997  
**Address:** 700 Brooksedge Blvd. Westerville.  
Additional office in Cincinnati.  
**Phone:** 614-818-9070  
**Web address:** mtechnologyservices.com

board hardware – is its ease of use, Kasper says.

"Out of the box, without any custom programming, it'll work with applications like (Microsoft) Outlook, or Goldmine, or ACT, the three most popular information-management programs," Kasper says.

By integrating the phone system with these customer relationship management applications, call recipients can see on screen who is calling and access any information about that caller instantaneously, he says.

In an online demonstration, from the viewpoint

of the user, TeleVantage operated in an Outlook-style e-mail environment, in which incoming calls are answered and manipulated by mouse clicks and drag-and-drops. All company phone users and their statuses – in, out, unavailable, on a call – appear on-screen, and rules can be easily applied through the software to orchestrate how calls follow each user and even how an individual return caller is prioritized and greeted.

"It's mind-boggling how intuitive the system is," says Connie Riley, Artisoft value-added reseller development manager, in leading the demonstration. "People only use about 20 percent of the functionality ... of traditional proprietary software because it has such arcane keystrokes."

### Making changes

"Once it's pretty much installed, you don't have to be a network administrator to make changes to the system: the voicemail, and the greeting and the cues of the call attendant can be easily

**("It's mind-boggling how intuitive the system is." Connie Riley, Artisoft)**

changed if you want to change the way you operate your business," says Steve Alexander, President of Aire-Flo Corp. in Columbus.

The company switched from a traditional vendor last spring to an M Technology Services phone system, he says. "If you're familiar with Windows products, and you're familiar with those programs, it's very easy to go through it and change parameters.

"All the (other) phone systems I looked at were just phone systems like I already had. This just seemed to be the way to go because it integrated into our network that we had at every terminal," Alexander says.

Kasper says M Technology Services is also touting the TeleVantage application's ability to track calls and marketing specifically to attorneys and physicians in an effort to expand business.

The company primarily serves Central Ohio business consumers, he says. Its only apples-to-apples competition is a similar service offered by Altigen Communications Services of Fremont, Calif., Kasper says.

A feather in M Technology's cap is the release of Toshiba phones that are 100 percent compatible with the TeleVantage system instead of only running on the proprietary Toshiba operating environment, Kasper says.

"There's a traditional phone provider that sees where the industry is going," he says.