Stratus Telecommunications Case Study: Managed & Wholesale Services VoIP Provider

Stratus Telecommunications' ENTICE™ Solutions power a new generation of business growth for Australia's Symbio Networks

Background

Sydney, Australia-based Symbio Networks provides managed and wholesale Voice over IP (VoIP) services based on the Stratus Telecommunications ENTICE™ (Emerging Networks Telecommunications Infrastructure Control Environment) Session Controller (E-SC) and the ENTICE Class 5 server. The company offers highly reliable, superior quality voice calls plus a wider array of business and consumer-class features than competitors to customers in the Asia Pacific Rim area.

Symbio manages services from its operations center in Sydney, where six ENTICE E-SC platforms aggregate incoming VoIP traffic and form the company's core voice network. Each ENTICE platform supports a different aspect of the company's operation (for example, wholesale or managed services). The Sydney center connects to numerous points of presence (PoPs) and collocation centers throughout Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore. Dialogic media gateways connected to the ENTICE platforms support media delivery and perform signaling.

The Challenge

Symbio Networks has gained a distinctive edge in a fiercely competitive market thanks to the flexibility, scalability, and broad feature set of the Stratus Telecom ENTICE E-SC platform and ENTICE Class 5 server. The combined solution has provided the key elements to add new revenue generating services and build its customer base throughout the decade without the need for a costly network upgrade.

How Symbio Achieved Success

Symbio realized success in the Asia Pacific region by adapting to a constantly changing market. After launching its business in 2002, Symbio integrated numerous VoIP networks based on Stratus Telecom solutions for a succession of providers, including Vodacom, PT Gerbang, and Gotalk.

Within two years the company had deployed its own network and had begun offering wholesale transport and termination services as well as a managed offering, which enables customers to launch VoIP-based services without high startup costs. With Symbio's managed solution, customers market, sell, and support their own services, and Symbio does all the rest, from managing core network elements such as the ENTICE solution to overseeing functions such as user provisioning and billing.

But as use and popularity of VoIP services began to grow, Symbio discovered that the managed services market was becoming increasingly saturated with customers who already had signed up for services. "Today most providers

use VoIP, so it became increasingly difficult to find new entrants into the market interested in our offering," said Alastair Slattery, Symbio's Manager of Wholesale and Business Development.

To generate more revenue and attract new customers, the company focused more intently on providing wholesale origination and termination services. The initiative appears to be working. Symbio's current call volume has jumped to 60 million minutes per month in Australia and New Zealand, up one third from its 40 million call volume 18 months ago. The increase has been the result of the deliberate decision to build wholesale market share, Slattery said.

Choosing Stratus

Symbio initially chose the ENTICE solution after evaluating several competing platforms. The company picked the solution for three key reasons:

- **Cost-effective and feature-rich:** The ENTICE E-SC platform provides more features and functionality for the cost than competitive offerings. The platform provides security, multimedia service delivery, interoperability, and interworking, while ensuring regulatory compliance. With support for numerous protocols, including SIP, H.323, H.248, SIGTRAN, and SS7, the solution interconnects calls and services across all wireline, cable, and wireless networks, enabling the company to serve any size and kind of provider.

- **Flexible solution:** All ENTICE solutions feature a flexible architecture that allows providers to customize services to fit customer requirements and offer new features more rapidly and cost effectively than using competing solutions. Open interfaces allow Symbio to integrate their ENTICE platform with all network elements and customer infrastructure, and rapidly implement new services. A custom application interface included with the solution enables rapid creation and deployment of innovative features with no disruption in service.

- **Highly scalable:** All ENTICE solutions can be offered in several configurations, from a single server solution that manages up to 4,000 sessions to multiple server solutions that can be deployed in numerous countries and offer global and local route plans, Class 5 features, centralized Operation, Administration, Maintenance, and Provisioning (OAM&P), and billing. New servers, ENTICE applications, and network nodes can be integrated quickly and easily, allowing companies to rapidly support new service requirements and customer growth.
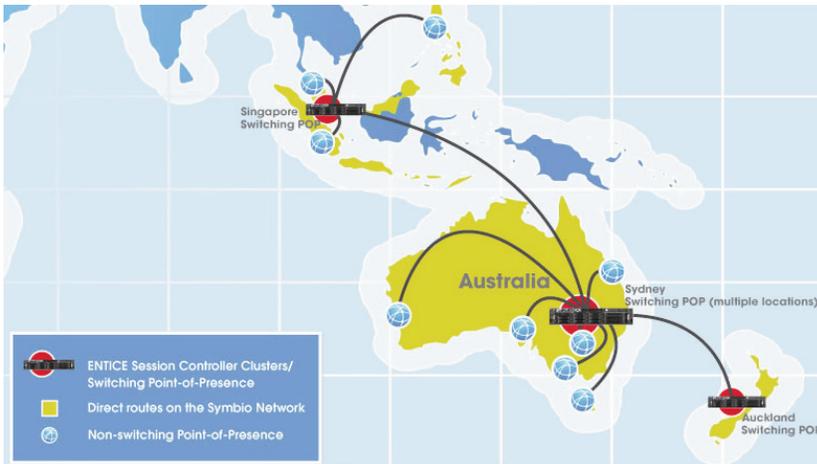
Achieving Success

Because Symbio had been using ENTICE solutions since the start, it has been easier and more cost effective to introduce products and support new business than it would have been with another product, Slattery noted. The platform's wide number of integrated features made it simple to add new Class 4, Class 5, and prepaid calling features as its business model evolved – at no extra expense. "As we developed our company we found that our ENTICE based solution was able to deliver everything we needed" he said.

In fact, the key features that attracted Symbio to the ENTICE solution in the first place are the very capabilities that have allowed the company to grow. "The solution has given us the ability to expand and mature as a provider," Slattery said.

For example, the solution's rich feature set has enabled the company to send and receive all types of calls for every size wholesale provider. The solution's flexibility has allowed the company to create and develop a proprietary application interface, enabling it to provision, manage, deliver, and bill for services. And the ENTICE solution's scalability and modularity has made Symbio's expansion

The Symbio Networks Regional Voice Network

ENTICE Session Controller Clusters/ Switching Point-of-Presence
Direct routes on the Symbio Network
Non-switching Point-of-Presence

easy and cost effective, Slattery said. "The modular nature of the ENTICE architecture is a key solution that allows us to scale our network in support of our business," he said. "When we need more capacity to support new customers, it's a simple matter to add another SIP server instance or call processor, put it on a new server, and then merge it into the same logical node. That allows us to scale exceedingly fast and support our continuing growth."

Moreover, as Symbio has developed, the ENTICE solution has become increasingly versatile, giving the firm the ability to complement its services, Slattery said. "As our services have grown in sophistication, so has the ENTICE solution. As a result, we've been able to introduce features that we couldn't only a year or two ago," Slattery said. "In this business, if you're not constantly growing and adding new features, you'll be swallowed up by the competition."

To facilitate business development for Symbio and all of its customers, Stratus Telecom routinely adds new capabilities to its product lines, Slattery pointed out. For example, in the last year Stratus Telecom has added a variety of messaging abilities, support for new softphones, and a host of new Class 5 office features, Slattery said. "If a new capability is supported in the SIP (Session Initiation Protocol) stack they add the feature remarkably fast," he said. "It breeds confidence that their developers will continue to serve our future needs."

In addition, Stratus Telecom professional services can develop new functionalities on request, Slattery noted. "We have a solid working relationship, so if there's something that we need we can just pick up the phone and speak directly to top management," he said. "We're able to get changes accomplished literally over night. Stratus Telecom has fulfilled dozens of feature requests in the last 12 months."

Looking Forward

The solution's ability to support multiple, geographically dispersed locations has made Symbio's most recent business initiative logistically simple. In August, the company began deploying a PoP in Singapore, enabling it to bring wholesale services to that country as well as Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. "Obviously, the Australian wholesale market is not one of infinite opportunities; we will reach a point where each new minute will be harder to earn," Slattery said. "However, moving into Southeast Asia positions us well to grow and compete in a much larger market. It's represents a whole new frontier and opportunity that we're very excited about."

In the near future, Symbio expects to more than double the amount of minutes it processes monthly. "We are targeting a landmark figure of 83 million minutes a month (1 billion annually) for Asia Pacific rim traffic in 2009 and we expect to reach this and then grow even further," Slattery said. "Our ENTICE solution is a key component that is enabling our exponential growth. Our partnership with Stratus Telecom is definitely a very valued alliance."

About Stratus Telecommunications

Stratus Telecommunications is a provider of complete VoIP and converged service solutions for telecommunications service providers. By helping its customers connect their world using trusted, innovative solutions and backing it with people they can count on, Stratus Telecom is making convergence simple. Stratus Telecom's solutions are installed in hundreds of service providers' networks including 14 of 20 of the world's largest carriers.

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