

Case Study: PointBridge Implements Exchange 2007 Unified Messaging (UM) to Enhance Access to Information

- Assess and design a unified messaging strategy
- Increase access to business-critical information
- Implement a cost-effective, easy-to-manage solution

Client Profile

PointBridge is a consulting company that connects people to people and people to information with Microsoft technologies. The company's areas of expertise include: SharePoint, Exchange, Office Communications Server and Core Infrastructure.

PointBridge is headquartered in Chicago and was recently named the 2007 Microsoft US Central Region Partner of the Year and was a 2007 Microsoft Global Partner of the Year finalist for portals and content management.

The Business Challenge

PointBridge is an organization that not only provides consulting services for communication and collaboration but depends heavily on such technologies itself on a daily basis. The company had previously used a hosted voicemail system that routed its calls over the Internet. A drawback to this design is that organizations can't ensure that voice receives priority over data via the Internet – resulting in poor call quality. This was an impediment to the business in terms of clear communication both internally and externally.

Further, PointBridge needed a better solution to allow its employees to access the data they needed anywhere, anytime. This wasn't possible with its current disparate voicemail and messaging systems.

"Both our work in the unified communications area and our dedication to providing a superior customer experience led us to our own implementation of unified messaging to improve upon our own best practices."

– Mike Gersten, CEO

The Solution

PointBridge opted to use Exchange 2007 Unified Messaging (UM) as its new voicemail platform in combination with a Cisco PBX phone system. Being an existing Exchange Server 2007 client, PointBridge knew this solution created the tightest integration for the messaging environment. It also allowed the company to take advantage of the investment it already had made with Exchange. UM is a direct extension of Exchange and is seamlessly integrated with the existing active directory infrastructure. This allows employees to more easily stay connected. For UM customers, many can also leverage existing licensing agreements via its initial Exchange deployment.

The Cisco IP telephony technology and the Microsoft Exchange UM technology also integrate seamlessly because both support Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) – the open, international standard that allows the two to work together. It also eliminates the need to buy a gateway product to connect the two – decreasing further messaging complexity.

PointBridge has significant experience building seamless messaging environments for its clients by bridging the gap between the telephony and messaging groups. PointBridge leveraged this knowledge to create their own UM best practices and implement the UM strategy.

Solution Benefits

The PointBridge expertise in the area of UM and the understanding of the benefits it would bring to the company contributed to the successful implementation. After the move to UM, PointBridge saw marked business improvement in three areas:

- **Access to Data:** The ability to have voicemail in your inbox is old news – UM gives employees much more. Its complete immersion with active directory and Exchange allows users to be connected no matter where they are without having to travel with laptops or smart phones or dial into a VPN. A call into the main voicemail box lets you move calendar appointments, enable "out of office" status on your laptop, send email and access contact data from Active Directory. It is the central way to stay in touch anywhere, anytime.
- **Cost Savings:** PointBridge expects to realize thousands of dollars in long-term cost savings. These savings were found in three main areas: elimination of a telephony hosting charge, server consolidation and decreased software costs through leveraging its existing Exchange investment.
- **Decreased Administration:** In the past, organizations would need to have an administrator provision users on and off the telephony and messaging systems separately. With UM, PointBridge is able to provision users through Active Directory. This allows one administrator to address messaging and telephony needs at the same time. This decreases and allows PointBridge's IT department to focus on more strategic issues.

PointBridge was able to implement Microsoft Exchange UM in one week and its deep level of expertise in this technology area contributed to its ease of implementation. The benefits have been substantial both in terms of dollars and business efficiencies. To learn more, please contact PointBridge at sales@pointbridge.com. And be sure to read about our Exchange expertise at blogs.pointbridge.com.

"Moving to Exchange Unified Messaging is more than just voicemail in your inbox. The business benefits are significant and include: cost savings by leveraging your existing telephony investment and increased productivity and connectivity for a mobile workforce."

Matt McGillen, Senior Consultant

About PointBridge

PointBridge (www.pointbridge.com) is a consulting company that connects people to people and people to information with Microsoft technologies. We build award-winning collaboration solutions with SharePoint, Exchange, Office Communications Server and Core Infrastructure.

PointBridge is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and was recently named the 2007 Microsoft US Central Region Partner of the Year. PointBridge was also honored in 2005 as the worldwide Microsoft Partner of the Year for Advanced Infrastructure Solutions and won the Microsoft Exchange Solution of the Year award.