

INTERVIEW

Continued from page NN 1

the number of workshops, exhibitors, and most importantly, attendees. We're expecting in excess of 4,000, which will surpass our numbers from the past several years.

TR: What changes in conference content can attendees expect this year?

Collin: For the first time ever Nortel has invited their data clients to come to Global Connect, which will provide a unique opportunity for voice and data people to network and learn from each other. In addition we'll have sessions focusing on strategic planning led by senior Nortel people and which will discuss where Nortel's product portfolio is headed. For the first time in INNMUG's history, Nortel's CEO will give the keynote address.

TR: Why should a Nortel user come to the conference?

Collin: All of our workshops and exhibitors have information, goods and services that are compatible with Nortel equipment. At other conferences you may find an interesting product only to discover it's not compatible with a PBX, or perhaps with a Nortel PBX. All of the products you see at our show will work with your Nortel infrastructure.

TR: What about non-Nortel users?

Collin: If a non-Nortel user is considering new equipment and would like to learn about Nortel equipment, see it demonstrated and talk to current users before making a decision, this is the perfect venue. In addition, a lot of the equipment on the trade show floor will also work with systems other than Nortel. We'll also have plenty of workshops on topics that would be of interest to any telecommunications professional—cabling, disaster recovery, asset management, and even personal development seminars on how to network and manage organizational changes.

TR: How is INNMUG doing in terms of general membership levels?

Collin: INNMUG continues to grow its membership. In fact, we've grown year over year throughout our entire history. We've just completed another successful membership drive, adding almost 800 new members.

TR: We (Telecom Reseller) became charter members of your new Nevada club. Have you worked on other regional start-ups and/or revamps of existing regionals?

Collin: We're doing both. In the past couple of years we've targeted several chapters a year, and provide help in revitalizing

chapters. We've also added several new chapters this year. In addition to Las Vegas, we've added chapters in Pittsburgh, PA, Jacksonville, FL, as well as Ireland and Belgium, and we're almost ready to welcome South Africa on board. We have an initiative that's about to be launched in Europe that should increase the number of chapters and members in that region as well as improve the slate of services that we're able to provide.

TR: What else is new in the development of INNMUG?

Collin: We've added several new Special Interest Groups (SIGs). These are communities of users with particular interests that wouldn't necessarily be addressed in the general membership meetings. We've added groups focusing on video conferencing, and on the legal and financial industries. We're investigating other sectors such as government and the hospitality industry.

TR: What's new at INNMUG?

Collin: This past year we launched a huge initiative in conjunction with Nortel. We surveyed our membership and asked where their distributors were most lacking in terms of service. We then approached five major distributors in North America and created task forces consisting of their most senior management, several of their major customers and Nortel. These groups have met several times over the past year to discuss how these companies can improve their service. We believe this is an industry first and we're very excited about providing the venue to help these companies identify areas for improvement and to improve customer satisfaction rates.

TR: What's ahead for the coming year (between now and the next INNMUG Conference)?

Collin: Our intent is to target another five distributors in the same initiative described above. At the same time we'll continue to monitor the changes made by the first five, and to confirm that a positive difference is occurring. The distributors who participated have been very positive, and we've been approached by other companies looking to be part of the next round.

We're intending to launch web casts that will be only available to our members. Nortel has offered to provide the content for these sessions, and after the conference we'll begin working on the program and schedule.

We're intending to be on the leading edge of industry change and to ensure that we provide the education and resources that telecom people need to stay current with the changing job markets. ☐

CALL MANAGEMENT

Call Management Solutions for Nortel telephony platforms

By Rito Salomone, President, Resource Software International Ltd.

Communication facilities are the life-line of most successful businesses and often the most difficult to measure. Administration of telephone charges, equipment fees, VoIP traffic, Internet usage, bill-back and corporate cost allocation are difficult tasks. Traditional methods of communication are constantly evolving. No longer are the telephone and facsimile machine the sole components. Telecommunications has evolved to include high-speed Internet, instant messaging, email, wireless hand-held and personal devices.

Call accounting remains a basic staple at the center of rapidly-changing communications delivery systems. Seasoned solutions now offer traffic analysis of network efficiency, alternate cost modeling for facility planning, grade of service, usage allocation and toll fraud detection.

Many Nortel Networks customers have various implementations. Depending on corporate requirements, companies may be utilizing any combination of Norstar, Business Communications Manager (BCM), Meridian 1 and Succession 1000. Norstar utilizes traditional serial communications for Station Message Detail Recording (SMDR), BCM provides IP connectivity and Meridian /Succession implementations allow for both. A robust CMS should be compatible with all platforms and provide seamless integration.

Meridian 1 and Succession 1000 users are accustomed to extensive security features built into the system. However, many Nortel Networks Developer Partners employ computer telephony integration toolkits to add extensive functionality to the smaller market BCM and Norstar. These features include 911 emergency notification, call trace, caller identification, toll restriction, screen pop, extended SMDR and forced/verified authorization code dialing.

Network performance is critical in a call center, emergency dispatch service, hospitality, government or even a small business. A CMS should produce statistics for trunk usage, grade of service, all trunks busy and peak/busy hour analysis in order to pinpoint over or under capacity environments. Many organizations struggle with workforce management and productivity. A CMS provides exception management

reports which highlight long duration, excessive cost, misdialed and other usage practices.

Professional services firms often face the tedious task of allocating communications expenses to customer account files. A CMS can deliver expense account code, password or authorization code reports. These results can be automatically directed to accounting systems, spreadsheets, HTML, email and a variety of other formats.

Customer relationship management is fundamental to the success of many organizations. When considering the upgrade of a CMS, it is very important to look for scalability, dynamic functionality and the strength of the relationship with the manufacturer. ☐

For more information visit www.telecost.com, call 905-576-4575 or email rsalomone@telecost.com.

PREDICTIVE DIALING

TeleDirect enhances its Liberation 6000 System

TeleDirect International, a provider of customer campaign management (CCM) and predictive dialing software, has announced the newest version of its flagship system, Liberation 6000. New features include Report Wizard and Voice Agent.

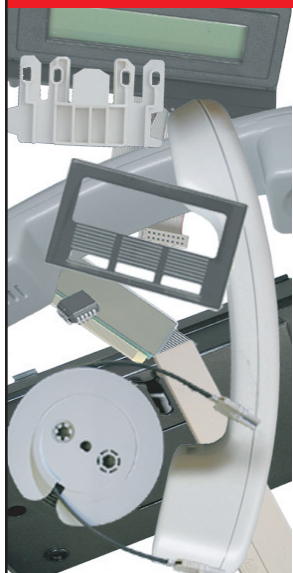
Liberation 6000 is a turnkey system that provides call centers in a variety of industries with CCM tools for both inbound and outbound programs. It includes software and wizards to guide managers and agents through campaigns, as well as a computer telephony server to manage the integration and predictive dialer functions. Its patented technology also enables managers to comply with the latest federal regulations for predictive dialers.

Key features:

- **Report Wizard**—an intuitive report creation tool that enables managers to select and view campaign and agent data quickly. It eliminates the time required to build queries and custom reports that measure performance. Users simply click on the Report Wizard button and follow a menu to select the components, date ranges, values and layout preference. The report may be previewed or printed.
- **VoiceAgent**—a computer telephony tool to support unmanned voice announcement campaigns. Managers can record, store and/or play a recorded announcement without using up agent licenses. It also allows a message to be played to connects that offers them a choice to hang up or be transferred to a live agent. Using VoiceAgent enables compliance with outbound telemarketing laws that require centers to queue customers for the next available agent, rather than abandon the call. The tool adheres to do-not-call policies and will not place calls to numbers on the Liberation 6000 do-not-call list. ☐

For more information visit www.tdirect.com or call 800-531-6440.

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