

# Experiencing IP Voice

Experio Solutions cuts costs and management headaches with nationwide Shoreline IP voice network.

**W**HEN MIKE SHISKO set out to look for a new phone system that would serve the 480 employees in his company's 14 offices throughout the United States, he did not have IP voice in mind. Shisko is director of information technology for Dallas-based Experio Solutions, an IT consulting firm created by Hitachi when it acquired a piece of a large consulting company. After the sale, Shisko was essentially given a clean slate on which to map Experio's voice and data strategy.

Shisko already had significant experience working with private branch exchanges (PBXs), having held responsibility for telecom as well as data networks for the previous six years.

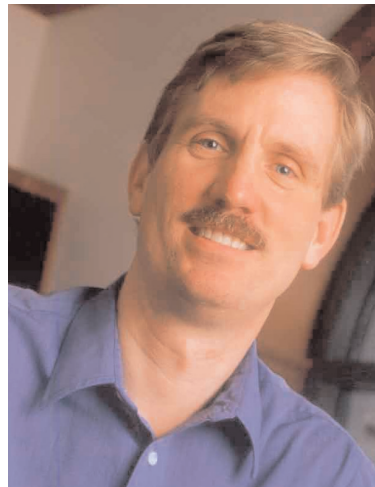
Eventually, he came across an IP voice system from Shoreline Communications. Shisko was initially attracted to the Shoreline3

reduced administration costs and savings in long-distance charges resulting from shipping calls over the Internet.

Shisko's positive experience is due in large part to Shoreline's approach to IP voice. Rather than try to retrofit a PBX or router to take on functions for which they were never intended, Shoreline3 was designed solely to offer reliable voice services over an IP net.

There are a couple of keys to the reliability built in to Shoreline3. First are the ShoreGear voice switches that provide call setup and teardown functions. All switching functions are performed in hardware using Shoreline's VxWorks, a real-time operating system similar to that used in pacemakers.

"In the legacy PBX world, five nines reliability is a familiar benchmark," says Greg Ness, director of marketing communications for



Experio's Mike Shisko is now an IP voice believer.

no single point of failure. Each switch also has its own connection to the PSTN and can provide dial tone for attached end devices, even during a power failure.

The ability to connect to the PSTN was an important considera-

The savings to be realized from toll bypass are significant. Whereas Experio previously paid about \$2,000 per office per month in long-distance charges, now it pays about \$2,000 for all offices combined (see chart).

Administration costs have likewise dropped dramatically, he says. As compared with the PBX setup in use before the Hitachi acquisition, Shisko estimates the Shoreline gear cuts management costs by about 60%. He says the Web-based administrative interface is simple to learn and use, and configuration changes can be delivered at once to all ShoreGear switches. Previously, each PBX change had to be administered separately, a time-consuming process that also made it difficult to keep configurations uniform over time.

Hardware acquisition costs were likewise reasonable, because ShoreGear switches of all sizes support the same feature set. Users can start with a 12-port model and add capacity as requirements grow. That's a welcome feature for Experio, which now has 785 employees in 21 offices, barely a year after its initial Shoreline deployment.

Harder to quantify is the productivity gains that come from the applications included with the Shoreline3 system. These include personalized call control and management, a Windows program that enables users to control features such as multiparty conferencing, one-click dialing and screen pops that show callers' names. A Unified Messaging application is integrated with Microsoft Outlook, including the ability to coordinate call-handling features with Outlook calendars. Another feature, AnyPhone, lets Experio employees who travel frequently assign their extension and call-handling profile to any other phone in the network.

"The ability to have all your contacts available for dialing, to be able to cut and paste numbers off Web sites and dial them, to know who's calling you and to see voicemail in your email inbox –people have fallen in love with all that functionality," Shisko says. "Shoreline was a good decision for us. It's proven to be very cost-effective and flexible, and it's done everything we were looking for it to do."

## Experio saves big with Shoreline

Per Site Acquisition Costs	Shoreline	Legacy PBX	Net Savings
Equipment, Network Upgrades	\$30,000	\$60,000	\$30,000
Installation - Hard Cost	\$0	\$1,700	\$1,700
<b>Total Per Site Acquisition Costs</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$61,700</b>	<b>\$31,700</b>
<b>Total Acquisition Costs (x16)</b>	<b>\$480,000</b>	<b>\$987,200</b>	<b>\$507,200</b>
Annual Costs			
Management	\$39,600	\$72,000	\$32,400
Maintenance (based on 10.1%)	\$48,480	\$129,280	\$80,800
Long Distance	\$30,000	\$151,000	\$121,700
<b>TCO Per Year</b>	<b>\$118,080</b>	<b>\$352,280</b>	<b>\$234,200</b>
<b>Total Over 5 Years</b>			<b>\$1,678,200</b>

suite of IP voice products because it offered a single point of administration, a consistent feature set for offices of all sizes, and easy connections to the public switched telephone network (PSTN) for local calling and backup – all at a reasonable price. Since installing the system, he's also found it to be highly reliable and even more cost-effective than expected, given

Shoreline, referring to systems that are operational 99.999% of the time. "With a pacemaker, five nines isn't good enough. A few minutes of heart failure per year isn't a positive thing."

In addition to running on a highly reliable hardware platform and OS, each ShoreGear switch operates independently, without involving a central server, which means there is

tion for Experio's Shisko. "We wanted a local dial tone in each office, and a lot of systems made that difficult to manage," he says. By contrast, once installed, each ShoreGear switch instantly finds the others, enabling a new office to start benefiting immediately from toll bypass. And the Shoreline equipment typically took only about two hours to get up and running.

For more information, see [www.goshoreline.com](http://www.goshoreline.com).