

France CitéVision

A success story from HP



"Triple Play" cable operator delivers VoIP services at a lower price



France CitéVision



Challenge

- Launch regional “Triple Play” services—converging voice, data, and video over a single line—to win market share in the French communications services market.

Solution

- France CitéVision partnered with HP and NetCentrex to build the infrastructure for its VoIP VPN in northern France. The solution leveraged HP’s SMC to enable new voice, data, and multimedia services to run efficiently across convergent telephony and data network infrastructures. HP also provided integration, deployment, and support services.

Results

France CitéVision’s VoIP VPN solution enabled it to:

- Complete a successful pilot program providing Triple Play services
- Forge inroads into a new market
- Offer Class V services to its customers
- Deliver significant cost savings versus traditional PBX telephony

The services and the hardware platform have both been perfect.

Kais Turki, technical director of voice services, France CitéVision

Technology marches on, becoming better, faster, and cheaper as it advances—and providing opportunities for companies sharp enough to spot them. France CitéVision, a regional cable operator, saw an opening in the market to deliver its “Triple Play” services—incorporating voice, data, and video services through a single pipe—by building out a fiber-based cable network infrastructure to service large companies, professionals, and private homes in northern France.

“We will begin by offering services within 10 medium cities in France and provide the latest generation of cable technology,” explained Roger Doire, secrétaire général, France CitéVision. “The previous coaxial cable went to 500 home paths, which led to noise and contention. We’re building out the next generation with each fiber path serving a smaller number of houses—resulting in dramatic improvement in customers’ perception of service quality.”

He noted that France CitéVision provides two main technologies over the same fiber: “Private homes use the newer technology of Data over Cable Service Interface Specification (DOCSIS) 2.0—it’s a recent standard set by the International Telecommunications Union, the first time one standard has been agreed upon by both telecom and cable organizations. And for large companies, we provide direct fiber-optic connection for large Internet, data transmission, and VoIP (voice over Internet protocol). We also provide coaxial termination to homes for interactive digital TV, telephony, and Internet access.”

HP provides the foundation for a carrier-grade, scalable enterprise VoIP VPN solution

France CitéVision partnered with NetCentrex and HP to design, integrate, and deploy its carrier-grade, scalable enterprise VoIP VPN (virtual private network) solution. The solution leverages the advantages of the HP SMC (signaling and media gateway controller) to provide a vital link between

the traditional, pervasive circuit-switched network and the emerging Internet protocol. The HP SMC enables new voice, data, and multimedia services to run efficiently across convergent telephony and data network infrastructures.

“We knew the founder of NetCentrex, and we knew that they are world-leading providers of softswitches,” recalled Doire. “I asked them which integrator would be best, and they recommended HP. Also, we had closely followed the Italian Fastweb project—they chose NetCentrex and HP for a VoIP project in eight of the largest cities in Italy, including Torino, Rome, and Milan. Our IP platform uses the CCS Softswitch by NetCentrex and everything else is by HP.”

The NetCentrex CCS Softswitch manages call control and routing to support a scalable, distributed architecture. Processing is distributed among switching units (SU) at a rate of up to 50 SUs per CCS Softswitch to ensure high availability. This solution includes all the features required by the competitive market: Class IV and V services to attract customers, advanced call routing to keep costs low and load balancing for high quality. The HP SMC, based on carrier carrier-grade HP OpenCall Signaling System 7 (SS7), is highly reliable and scalable to support critical Internet protocol-public switched telephone network (IP-PSTN) traffic and global availability as France CitéVision grows.

“The quality of HP Consulting and Integration Services was another reason why we chose HP,” emphasized Kais Turki, technical director of voice services, France CitéVision. “The services and the hardware platform have both been perfect. VoIP requires 99.999 percent availability for the higher quality of service. The redundancy in the distributed architecture and the high availability and quality of the software and hardware meet our requirements.”

A key advantage was HP's experience in deploying large VoIP projects with NetCentrex, like the Fastweb service in Italy—that experience reduced our risk and helped ensure our success.

Kais Turki, technical director of voice services, France CitéVision

Interoperability, standards ensure success

In VoIP, the interoperability is very important," Turki stressed. "If you miss anything, the quality of service fails. The HP SMC easily met our requirements for interoperability between the NetCentrex Softswitch, French SS7 protocols, Cisco gateways, and MGCP and SIP protocols. HP's experience deploying OpenCall SS7 in some of the largest companies in France was a guarantee of success."

Doire agreed, citing the success of France CitéVision's pilot project in Amiens, a city in the region of Picardy: "After testing, we are very confident about the stability, functionality, and scalability of HP's telephony platform and the NetCentrex Softswitch."

"Selecting a company with HP's depth of experience was very important for our customers and for our project," added Turki. "We searched for a company like HP with 24 x 7 support and integration services. A key advantage was HP's experience in deploying large VoIP projects with NetCentrex, like the Fastweb service in Italy—that experience reduces our risk and time to market."

Delivering a cost-effective alternative to PBX

French companies, Doire said, are very receptive to IP telephony and eager to find a cost-effective alternative to PBX (private branch exchange, a telephone system within an enterprise that switches calls between enterprise users on local lines while allowing all users to share a certain number of external phone lines). Cost savings associated with combining data and voice services is a primary benefit of VoIP VPN; NetCentrex customers typically realize savings of more than US\$50,000 per year, based on an office with 100 employees.

"Our difference is that we provide the quality and security of a primary line, but at a lower price, with flat-price, Class V services that enable companies to reduce their expenses, relative to PBX," offered Doire. "For a small company of 20 people in France, we can save them 50 percent over the cost of renting and operating a private branch exchange (PBX). Our prospects are very interested in IP telephony, and we know we can deliver quality of service within our own network."

Compelling services

For a single line, France CitéVision can offer Class V services that include call forwarding to a phone number or voice mail; call filtering; CLIP (caller line identification presentation); and others. For multi-line systems, Class V services can include welcome messages, 3three-way calling, call hold, supervised transfer, call waiting, and more.

"Within an enterprise, VoIP VPN makes it possible to use a standard TV set with a phone to establish and connect video transmission for video conferencing," Doire explained. "We can bill by the minute, and that is very attractive. We can provide full-screen video on TV or on a PC, and either can be used for video conferencing. Until now, this service was so expensive that it was only used by CEOs and boards of directors for meetings. But with the lower price of this service, we can push its use down to lower levels of a company for training, technical explanations, and so forth."

He noted that unified messaging—the handling of voice, fax, and regular text messages as objects in a single mailbox that a user can access either with a regular e-mail client or by telephone—enables subscribers to receive information through TV sets, PCs, and mobile devices. "Having full integration, from wired-to-mobile and mobile-to-wired connectivity, is very attractive to our customers."

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Roger Doire, secrétaire général, France CitéVision

Derived benefits

Cost savings for customers leads to increased revenue for France CitéVision.

"Our goal is to achieve ROI in four years," Doire stated. "We are on target to achieve 35 percent penetration of our Triple Play service, which is a conservative goal given the success of VoIP in Italy."

He pointed out that the two primary metrics for the success of France CitéVision's venture are penetration rate and turnover, and Doire explained how the company is closely monitoring its quality of service: "We have reporting every month to show us how we are doing, and we have other technical tools and supervision tools to register every lost call and to record every complaint. We use a billing and customer relationship system that completely integrates the three types of services we offer.

"We can query our database about telephony problems or Internet problems, and then receive a complete report about incidents and registration. These issues are extremely important to us. We've already begun to sell subscriptions to TV and Internet service, and we believe IP telephony will be a revolution of our services."

Technology marches on, evolving communications as it goes and creating winners and losers along the way. By paying close attention to its quality of service and the needs of its customers, France CitéVision is doing all the right things to ensure that it's one of the success stories.

For more information go to www.hp.com/communications

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