



SNIP Customizes Small Business Voice Solutions with Iperia ActivEdge™

Located ten minutes out of metropolitan Philadelphia in Pennsauken, New Jersey, SNIP is a CLEC (Competitive Local Exchange Carrier) that does business in the highly competitive small business market of New Jersey, Delaware and metropolitan Philadelphia.. SNIP began as an ISP (Internet Services Provider) in 1996 and evolved into an integrated voice and data services provider four years later. It didn't take SNIP long to recognize that yet another transition was needed in its business model: a transition to VoIP-based services, with the ability to customize service offerings for every small business client.

Services Customized for the Individual Small Business

"Customization of a voice-based solution for each of our customers is a key differentiator for us," said Kyle Thomas, Director of Telecommunications Operations for SNIP. "We wanted to make the transition to VoIP because we recognized that this was where telecommunications technology was going, but we also wanted to be able to provide customized voice system solutions to our customer base."

SNIP wanted to enter the market with a full-featured and customizable voice system that could utilize the same set of protocols and fully integrate with the Sylanro telecommunications system it already had in place. "What we needed was a solid voicemail and auto attendant offering that could operate seamlessly with our Sylanro platform, and that was robust enough to offer customization capabilities on a per-customer basis," said Thomas. "We reviewed a number of voicemail offerings, but we didn't feel we had an effective solution that could satisfy all of our needs until we were introduced to Iperia."

Thomas said that Iperia's ActivEdge™ product gives SNIP the ability to customize both voicemail and auto attendant functions for its small business clients. At the same time, the Iperia solution fully integrates with SNIP's existing Sylanro platform. "Our average business customer is running twelve business lines, and is looking for inexpensive and reliable phone service," said Thomas. "Customers are also looking for alternatives to larger carriers, because of price point and a desire for better service and support. Iperia is an excellent business partner for us. Together with Iperia, we can offer SNIP customers highly responsive system support with rapid delivery of new features and enhancements and ease of operation. This service combination allows SNIP to provide a high-performing and very cost-competitive voice solution in the local small business market."

Providing an Effective Solution Set for both the VoIP and the TDM Worlds

The Iperia voicemail and auto attendant solution gives SNIP added flexibility, since not all of SNIP's customer base is on VoIP. "We can deploy the Iperia solution in either a VoIP or a TDM environment," said Kyle Thomas. "This allows us to support both kinds of deployments, which is very essential in a market that is migrating to VoIP, but not all at once."

Thomas and SNIP plan to expand beyond the features of voicemail and auto attendant for small business clients in the future, continuing to build with Iperia solutions. "It is not just a matter of having all of the features and the bells and whistles," said Thomas. "We also know that Iperia gives us a strong business partner that is able to bring us reliability, responsiveness and redundant server architecture that guarantees uptime with failover options. This is a lot of capability that we do not have to worry about as a service provider, and it allows us to focus on our end business."

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With a carrier-grade voice solution at a fraction of the cost, SNIP's clients are able to compete for business in their own markets with much larger communications operations—and to look “large.” Thomas indicates that one of the best values that the Iperia voicemail and auto attendant system delivers is its granularity. “For example, the auto attendant can be configured for each independent business by using menu-driven options,” said Thomas. “We look forward to the day when we can also train our customers to self-configure their own auto attendant options, which is on our business roadmap.”

Executing a Smooth Implementation

According to Thomas, learning the Iperia ActivEdge system was straightforward for his technicians, especially since configuration for auto attendant is entirely GUI-based. “Any time we had a question for Iperia, their turnaround was typically ten minutes, and that really helped,” said Thomas. “Our questions got routed to an engineer and if there was anything that the engineer doesn't know, the right internal resource was immediately dispatched so we could get an answer.”

SNIP installed the Iperia system, which shares the same protocols as the Sylantrio platform, in November, 2005. “Within one month, we had all of our customer voicemail on it,” said Thomas. “One month after that, we had added all of our customers' auto attendant functions.”

Ease of system installation was facilitated by a burn-in period for the voicemail and auto attendant applications that also allowed time to finalize the configuration procedures that would be used for customers. “In the process, we found that it was easy to miss some of the little details,” said Kyle Thomas. “Taking the time to perform a thorough burn-in and walkthrough of how we would be deploying these new features for our customers, and working hand in hand with Iperia, was very beneficial.” End to end, it took six months for SNIP to order the equipment from Iperia, install and test it, develop an implementation plan, revise internal provisioning and servicing procedures, and transition its entire customer base to the Iperia voicemail and auto attendant. “The largest portion of our implementation effort was actually spent on our own internal provisioning procedures,” said Thomas. “The new voice-based features we were now able to deliver and to customize for our clients required tweaks to our internal workflows and processes. In the end, it was really worth it. Our customers are all running smoothly with enhanced capabilities for their businesses—and our own business is growing.”

Looking to the future, SNIP is actively planning to add more telephony features for its small business clients, like fax and conferencing. “These are all areas that the small business market wants services in,” said Thomas. “With the Iperia solution, we are well positioned to respond aggressively to these needs and to help our clients be everything they want to be with their voice technology.”

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