Level 3 COMMUNICATIONS

Connecting and Protecting the Networked World℠

SEEING IS BELIEVING

GLOBAL SOFTWARE LEADER USES LEVEL 3 COMMUNICATIONS ENTERPRISE VOICE AND DATA SOLUTIONS TO POWER SALES CENTERS

A Hands-on Engagement

With its ubiquitous software, operating systems and interactive gaming platforms, Microsoft has long been recognized as a pioneering force in technology. Microsoft Technology Centers (MTCs), were developed to support customers as they solved their business challenges and explored new opportunities — including unified communications (UC).

Staffed with technology and infrastructure experts, the 11 MTCs across the United States enable customers to explore a variety of collaboration scenarios, test the technology in real time and evaluate how the setup matches up to the company's needs before making a purchase. To support the needs of its diverse customer base and ensure high-quality connectivity for demonstrations, the company adopted enterprise voice and data solutions from Level 3 Communications.

"MTCs are testing environments for our customers and need to be able to handle virtually any setup a customer could imagine while delivering an exceptional collaboration experience," says Dean Suzuki, UC technology architect for the MTC in Irvine, California. "Level 3 voice and data solutions provide the reliable service, scalability and flexibility we need to deliver the best possible experience in our centers for our customers."

Summary

Challenge:

- Achieve greater operational flexibility and scalability across MTCs
- Streamline custom solution development and deployment
- Enable more personalized interactions with prospective customers

Solution:

- Level 3® Voice Complete
- Level 3® MPLS/IP VPN

Benefits:

- Accelerated provisioning time from weeks to hours
- Enabled more robust and creative custom deployments
- Supported off-site trial solutions for improved customer experience and product evaluation
- Simplified network troubleshooting

Optimized Performance to Build Leading Edge Solutions

Microsoft Lync is an enterprise-ready unified communications platform that enables users to collaborate securely by phone, chat and video with colleagues and customers from virtually anywhere. Customers can come to the MTCs to see the solution in action and estimate the cost of implementing Lync in their businesses.

Working with Level 3 provides the centers with a high-performance network backbone to better leverage existing technology assets such as hardware, software and cloud applications for completing and sharing deployment designs. Each center is supported by Level 3's industry-leading SIP trunking services, offering a dedicated IP address and up to five direct inbound dialing (DID) numbers. The centers share infrastructure and virtual machines over a dedicated Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) network, delivering on-demand access to the bandwidth and dynamic network traffic prioritization for optimal performance across operations. With Level 3 voice solutions, the centers have all the tools they need to share solution designs and put prototypes into action.

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-Dean Suzuki, UC technology architect, Microsoft Technology Center in Irvine, California

"We're always pushing the envelope with new solution designs so we can better anticipate the needs of our customers," Suzuki says. "The speed, reliability and flexibility of the Level 3 voice and data services allow us to explore unique ways to use Microsoft Lync for business and continually build a library of cutting-edge collaboration designs that bring an entirely new element to the sales process."

Imagination Comes to Life

Around the world and across the country, customers visit MTCs to visualize how a Microsoft Lync solution could benefit their business and determine the level of investment they'd like to make. The Boston MTC wanted to take testing environments to a whole new level by replicating the experience of using Lync in a hotel lobby, a home office or a conference room.

"One of the aspects of Microsoft Lync we really want to highlight is the quality of the collaboration experience regardless of whether it's used as a standalone PBX or in conjunction with other solutions. Level 3's high-performance voice services fully support our ability to show virtually every use of the platform without any limitations or impact on service quality."

-Dave Chomas, unified communications technology architect, Microsoft Technology Center, Boston

Dave Chomas, UC technology architect for the Boston MTC, can assign live local phone numbers provided by Level 3 to replicate collaboration scenarios that enable the MTC team to demonstrate how Lync delivers value in virtually any environment. For example, the conference room scenario lets up to three users dial separately into a live conference call platform featuring an auto attendant and a pre-configured voicemail box. In other scenarios, phone customers can be assigned individual phone extensions, allowing them to assess call quality using Lync.

"One of the aspects of Microsoft Lync we really want to highlight is the quality of the collaboration experience, regardless of whether it's used as a standalone PBX or in conjunction with other solutions," Chomas says. "Level 3's high-performance voice services fully support our ability to show virtually every use of the platform without any limitations or impact on service quality."

Taking a Test-drive

Like its counterparts in Philadelphia and Boston, the Chicago MTC wanted to offer customers a different kind of hands-on experience with Microsoft Lync. "One of the biggest challenges to serving a market with such a diverse customer base is creating custom testing environments that demonstrate the full value proposition of Microsoft Lync with limited time and

manpower," says Kevin Gates, UC technology architect at the Chicago MTC. "Our goal is to give each customer the full trial experience so they can make an informed decision."

> **"The beauty of the Level 3 SIP platform and MPLS is the simplicity of service provisioning and supporting the deployment. We can easily configure Lync for voice with minimal effort and troubleshoot network issues much faster because all the services are delivered by a single provider."**
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> **-Teo De Las Heras, UC technology architect, Microsoft Technology Center, Philadelphia**

The MTCs give customers a complete Microsoft Lync deployment to test out for several weeks at a time. Unlike the complex ordering and provisioning processes of other vendors, Level 3 voice and data make it easier for MTCs to configure Lync environments for customers and sales partners alike to use in their own environments.

"The beauty of the Level 3 SIP platform and MPLS is the simplicity of service provisioning and supporting the deployment," says Teo De Las Heras, the Philadelphia MTC's UC technology architect. "We can easily configure Lync for voice with minimal effort and troubleshoot network issues much faster because all the services are delivered by a single provider."

Giving Full Support

The Microsoft Technology Centers are revolutionary in how they connect the company with buyers and offer direct, hands-on experiences with the next generation of collaboration technologies. Working with Level 3 Communications gives the MTCs a high-performance, cost-effective and reliable converged communications backbone to meet the evolving demands of today's technology buyers. With best-in-class technology and high-touch support from a global leader, the MTCs can continue to help the company redefine technology solution delivery well into the future.

"Level 3 truly understands what we're trying to accomplish with our direct, customized Lync deployments," Suzuki says. "No other vendor can deliver the same level of technical knowledge and integrated technologies to support our vision."

ABOUT LEVEL 3

We build, operate and take end-to-end responsibility for the network solutions that connect you to the world. We put customers first and take ownership of reliability and security across our broad portfolio.

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