



In this edition of ASK NEWS, we review several strategies that can help your business control IT costs. We explore proven concepts such as reducing overall paper consumption and energy usage to implementing customized, managed professional services and unified communications, all in an effort to help your business thrive in this challenging economic environment.



Stephen Pirolli, ASK Technologies, Inc.

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Go Green! Go Paperless! Save Time & Money!

Curt Schappell

Now, more than ever, is the time for every business to make significant reductions in its operational costs related to printed forms and printed reports.

Determine your annual cost of paper to print your computer generated reports. Then determine your annual cost for printer ink cartridges or ribbons. Then determine your annual cost to store those reports in binders & then in filing cabinets. Then determine your annual cost to store prior year reports

in storage locations. Then determine your annual costs to shred old reports that are no longer required. When all are added together, you will undoubtedly see a very large expense contribution to your P&L statement.

Now imagine that all of those reports were stored electronically as PDFs or Word Documents or Web pages on your existing data server in folders that can be easily accessed, viewed, edited, printed, emailed or faxed as needed, not to fail to

mention the ability to easily archive and backup the folders to existing disk drives, CDs or DVDs or memory sticks or magnetic tapes for long-term electronic storage.

Which scenario best describes what your business is currently doing? If your answer is #1, then instead of printing reports to a printer, you should send each report to a PDF file, Word Document file or a Html

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WELCOME NEW CLIENTS:



Managed Services: Save Money on IT Costs While Improving Quality and Service

from our Sales Staff

In today's economy, companies are feeling increased pressure to reduce costs without sacrificing the level of quality and services provided by their IT departments. A recent survey by research firm

Techtel Corporation found that overall technology spending has fallen drastically over the last four quarters and IT spending in the U.S. is expected to continue to decline. Although technology is a

significant expense for most businesses, it has also been proven to increase productivity, reduce other costs and ultimately improve a company's bottom line.

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Go Green! Go Paperless! Save Time & Money!

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(Web Page) file that can be routed to a selected private or shared report folder or can be emailed to any recipient's email address. If desired, reports can also be faxed to any recipient's fax number.

Often times, large reports contain only a small portion of information desired by the persons receiving those reports, such as only the report totals, or only the exceptions summary at the end of the report. Electronic reports provide recipients with the ability to view and print only the page or pages relevant to their specific needs.

Companies that have invested in internet websites can also provide their employees, customers, and vendors with secure access features to view relevant information without the need for customers to use the phone to contact the Customer Service Department about orders and invoices, or for employees to contact the Human Resources Department or for Vendors to contact the Accounts Payable Department.

Another cost saving feature involves the use of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) exchange of information via the

transmission of data in pre-defined formats for customer invoices or vendor purchase orders that eliminates the need to mail or fax invoices or purchase orders. Electronic Payment remittance advices can be used to automatically apply payments to open invoices to eliminate the time required to manually apply payments.

At **ASK Technologies**, we strive to provide our existing client base with these powerful capabilities. What does it take to make this happen?

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"Electronic reports provide recipients with the ability to view and print only the page or pages relevant to their specific needs."

Managed Services: Save Money on IT Costs While Improving Quality and Service

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But many companies are finding that it is simply too costly to maintain internal comprehensive IT departments. As a result, many CFOs are looking to "Managed Services" to help lower their costs and reduce downtime.

Technology is no longer a luxury, but a necessity for business success and it is critical to find a managed services provider that can deliver on the promise

of IT service quality and efficiency. With more and more companies - small to medium businesses included - facing the challenges of finding a simple, cost-effective IT solution, following are some benefits to using the Managed Services model.

An Enhanced Business Focus

Using Managed Services allows companies to focus on running

their business, rather than worrying about supporting their IT needs internally. In addition, the model helps companies to minimize IT risk and obtain technology peace of mind. Managed services providers can fully or partially manage the IT infrastructure for companies and they can

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Our Managed Services will help you work better.

Cut Costs With a Cisco Unified Communications Deployment

from our Sales Staff

Business communications challenges can affect both profitability and customer/partner relationships, especially as employees' work-spaces extend beyond the traditional desktop environment.

With a slowing economy, unified communications could become a major source of savings for enterprises trying to cut costs.

Unified communications can contribute to cost-cutting in a variety of ways:

Reduced air travel: Cisco executives have hailed TelePresence, the company's high-definition video conferencing solution, as the "green technology of the century," largely because they believe it could dramatically reduce business air

travel.

2) Lower cell phone bills: Fixed-mobile convergence (FMC) options are maturing rapidly, with seamless handover and strong partnerships letting companies feel confident about deploying mobile phones as the primary communication device.

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Go Green! Go Paperless! Save Time & Money!

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First of all, we make sure that your Applications Server can securely access the internet and that it is capable of sending mail. Then we modify the applications software that currently sends all reports to a printer so that the user has the option to select 'E' to email the report instead of selecting an available system printer. In addition, we provide options for users to email themselves, select a recipient from an email address book, to enter and save a recipient's email address, to enter an email 'subject', and to attach the report to the email as a "Word" or "Html" document.

Word documents are easily edited and 'paged'. Html documents are more highly compressed, intended more for viewing, and use less disc space when saved. All emailed reports will fit on standard 8 1/2 x 11" paper when printed in 'portrait' mode.

We electronically automate your current options to fax or email documents as PDFs automatically from your business server using the VSIFAX product.

We provide you with the option to print or email custom forms such as invoices with attached images using the UnForm product

and Document Scanned Imaging software.

These solutions combined offer not only a "greener" operating environment but also huge cost reductions across the enterprise. And what is your cost? Probably nothing in the long term when compared to the savings created by the cost reductions in paper, filing, storage, printers, ink, mailing envelopes, postage, phone calls, customer service staffing, and increased productivity of your existing staff.

For more information, contact your **ASK** salesperson today at (610) 617-0300.



"These solutions combined offer not only a "greener" operating environment but also huge cost reductions across the enterprise."

Cut Costs With a Cisco Unified Communications Deployment

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As long as the properly equipped dual-mode phone is within a corporate Wi-Fi network, the calls are routed (quite cheaply) over the corporate IP PBX network. When callers leave the Wi-Fi network, the phone automatically hands over to the cellular network, giving workers more flexibility while reducing the overall number of mobile minutes used.

3) More efficient call center resolution:

Call centers have been some of the earliest adopters of unified communications; and for those that have not yet upgraded, some serious savings are possible. Not only will a move to all-IP cut phone costs, but truly embracing unified communications can save time, pleasing customers and making staff more productive.

4) Cheaper international and long-distance calls:

Something of a no-brainer when it comes to converging networks, but recent advances mean there are plenty of new opportunities to save beyond those provided by traditional IP telephony.

But VoIP is also advancing on mobile handsets, giving UC-

savvy enterprises with international users a way to avoid paying exorbitant roaming fees, by having users switch to Wi-Fi mode when out of country or letting their domestic customers use IP telephony for international calls from their cell phones with the same benefits their landline IP counterparts have.

5) Cheaper equipment:

If unified communications upgrades are done as part of an ongoing equipment refresh cycle, switching to IP can also net some major savings on infrastructure equipment. In some respects, the equipment can be cheaper not only in terms of just the servers themselves but also a smaller physical footprint, which can mean less cost of space and less cost in cooling.

6) Telecommuting:

Better collaboration and communication tools also make it easier for enterprises to embrace telecommuting, which can cut costs for workers and employers in a variety of ways while also being easier on the environment.

Telecommuting reduces gas consumption and reduces the cost of maintaining extra office spaces for employees. If

enough employees work remotely at least part-time, the company can embrace a hotel-style desk system, where each desk station is assigned on a day-by-day basis, greatly reducing the total number of desks needed.

7) Consolidated networks:

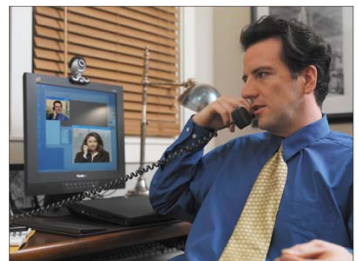
Finally, moving to unified communications often means consolidating networks – a logistical nightmare at first but, in the long term, a great way to reduce overhead and management with a single, unified IP infrastructure.

By productively managing your business's communications in a unified environment, you:

- Extend the workspace beyond its traditional desktop-bound limitations
- Speed access and improve communication
- Integrate different device modes and communication applications
- Dramatically improve collaboration
- Streamline business processes, reach the right resource the first time, and enhance profitability



“Telecommuting reduces gas consumption and reduces the cost of maintaining extra office spaces for employees.”



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Cut Costs With a Cisco Unified Communications Deployment

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As Cisco unified communications applications become more prevalent in the extended work-space, more organizations are also realizing the associated benefits—both in terms of employee time savings and financial savings.

Unified business communications applications not only facilitate productivity improvements for employees wherever their work takes them, they can also enhance the way in which all employees communicate.

- Organizations using unified communications saved an average of 32 minutes daily per employee because presence technology enabled staff to reach one another on the first try
- Use of softphones resulted in an average savings of \$1,727 per month in cell phone long distance charges. Mobile workers also saved 40 minutes each day, enjoyed greater business communications convenience, and generated annual productivity gains of 3.5 days per year through business continuity impact
- Organizations using unified messaging reported that employees saved 43 minutes per day from efficient message management while mobile workers saved 55 minutes per day
- Companies using integrated voice & web conferencing reported a 30% reduction in conferencing expenses and an average savings of \$1,700 per month in travel costs.

For others, the savings may simply come from having reduced hardware requirements and operating expenses.

And in today's dynamic business environment, perhaps the most important benefit comes from having a communications system that can change and grow at a moment's notice, enabling new capabilities for more effective business communications, employee mobility, streamlining business processes, and improving profitability.

For more information, contact your **ASK** salesperson today at (610) 617-0300.



"...moving to unified communications often means consolidating networks...a great way to reduce overhead..."

Reduce Energy Costs by Switching to Laptops

from our Sales Staff

According to the US Department of Energy, you should consider buying a laptop for your next computer upgrade; they use much less energy than desktop computers.

A typical laptop uses a maximum of 15 watts and it powers down (goes to sleep) when it's not used for several minutes. A typical desktop computer uses about 130 watts, with older models being even less efficient.

A laptop also offers the extra versatility of being portable. On many laptops, you can hook up a separate full-size monitor and keyboard for use when you're at home. The monitor accounts for about half of the desktop's energy use. Most of these monitors use cathode ray tube (CRT) technology. Color liquid crystal displays (LCD) desktop monitors use only 10% to 20% as much power per square inch as color CRT monitors.



Managed Services: Save Money on IT Costs While Improving Quality and Service

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either be a company's solitary technology source or can supplement a current IT staff. Possible Managed Services scenarios include the management of:

- One infrastructure operation, such as disaster recovery
- All infrastructure operations, including email, the network, security, servers, desktops, laptops and mobile devices
- All software, as with "software-as-a-service" or SaaS.

With advances in technology, especially the Internet, the concept of managing an IT environment from a remote location can not only reduce IT staffing needs, but can also give companies of all sizes the opportunity to leverage more sophisticated technologies than if they had to run the functionality in-house.

Lowered Total IT Cost

On the surface it may appear to be more cost effective to hire a consultant or a full-time employee for IT. CFOs often believe that hiring someone for a few thousand dollars a month as part of their staff will save their

company money in the long run. In reality, however, this is often not the case. Having a full-time employee, or using an outside contractor on an as-needed basis (usually when there is a crisis) may actually end up costing business more in the long run.

In addition to the expenses associated with payroll, healthcare and other benefits are the costs associated with training. With the rapid advancements in technology, training IT staff is essential. With Managed Services, training is no longer the company's challenge. The Managed Services provider ensures that the skills of their team are up to date, typically obtaining advanced certifications for Microsoft, Cisco and other technologies.

Managed Services can result in tangible and significant IT cost savings. For example, one Washington DC-based association realized a cost savings of \$250,000 per year in their IT infrastructure and support budget by switching to a Managed Services firm. This type of savings can go a long way toward investment in other areas of an or-

ganization or simply as a way to lower overall expenses in a tough economy.

Looking to a Managed Services organization to provide IT-as-a-service helps companies to avoid not only hiring internal IT staff, but also maintaining expensive IT infrastructures in-house. With Managed Services, companies save money in areas such as staff, office space, upgrades, equipment and training.

Avoidance of Unpredictable IT Charges

With the Managed Services model, organizations typically pay a fixed monthly fee, instead of fluctuating, unpredictable costs associated with the "pay as you go" external IT provider. This can be a much more cost-effective means of managing an organization's IT infrastructure, as no extra costs are incurred in the event that something goes wrong.

Achievement of Backup and Disaster Recovery Goals

In choosing Managed Services, companies should evaluate the provider's security

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"With Managed Services, companies save money in areas such as staff, office space, upgrades, equipment and training. "

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infrastructure. Physical security is the first layer of protection in shielding a company's mission-critical data and systems. If a company is outsourcing the management of its intellectual property, ensuring that it is protected from loss, theft and corruption is critical to the future of the business. Thus, security is one of the most important factors to consider.

Managed Services providers need to provide the highest level of data backup services to clients in order to avoid any loss of data. If the service provider does not back up their clients' data properly and have a way to access data if the company's system fails, there is little value in protecting it.

Improved IT Quality

Because Managed Services providers are immersed in technology every day, typically they are better skilled in any one area of IT than most clients could ever be. Small to medium businesses have the particularly difficult challenge of having smaller staffs and limited infrastructure support, while still requiring high-quality IT ser-

vices to remain competitive. Using the right Managed Services model enables these businesses to access and use the same quality IT offerings as larger companies, but for less money.

Managed Services providers, such as **ASK Technologies**, offer a wealth of technology knowledge and great resources. A company with its own IT staff is often stuck with just a single person or a very small team with limited expertise.

In contrast, Managed Services providers typically have teams of highly-experienced, fully-trained professionals who are experts across the technology spectrum, including e-mail, security, network, servers, desktops, laptops, and PDAs.

When a company hires its own IT staff, there are challenges around vacations, training and time off due to illness. Managed Services provides around-the-clock monitoring and management, as well as coverage throughout the entire term of the contract. Vacations, illness and even off-hours coverage do not adversely impact your

technology infrastructure or support levels.

Bottom Line

These days, it is difficult to predict the future of the financial markets and how that will impact companies of all sizes within all industries. Especially in such an unstable economic environment, budgets are under even more scrutiny. At the same time, in order to remain successful, your company cannot forego investment in areas such as IT, that has proven to be a positive differentiator among competitors.

Considering that the use of Managed Services can save your company significant costs, while helping you to remain focused on what you know best--how to run your business--what could be better?

Your organization will gain technology peace of mind with always-on Managed Services and significantly reduce business risk in the process.

Call your **ASK** salesperson today for more information at (610) 617-0300.



"Technology is no longer a luxury, but a necessity for business success."



"Managed Services providers, such as ASK Technologies, offer a wealth of technology knowledge and great resources."

Leading the Way in Unified Communications

from our Sales Staff

Leading the Way in Unified Communications

"Cisco began developing IP Communications solutions in 1997 and has provided IP Communications services and applications longer than any other vendor. Today, Cisco is the number one overall voice vendor in the world and the leader in most IP telephony categories including Web and audio conferencing." -Synergy Research 4Q CY07

- **More than 70 percent of Fortune 500 companies** now use Cisco Unified Communications to build competitive advantage.
- **More unified communications installations:** There are now more than 50 thousand Cisco Unified Communications customers around the world. These companies enjoy more effective communications that have a direct impact on top and bottom lines.
- **More IP phones:** Cisco has deployed over 15 million IP phones, up to five times more than its nearest competitor.
- **More true IP endpoints shipped:** In addition to IP phones, Cisco has shipped more than 11 million Cisco Unity (unified messaging) seats, Cisco Unified Contact Center agents and Cisco Unified MeetingPlace (rich media conferencing) licenses.



SCO to Deliver Virtualization-Based UNIX

from our Tech Staff

SCO is pleased to announce that new optimized versions of its UNIX operating systems will soon be available. These versions will run and perform within a VMware environment.



The first version to be released will be a pre-built OpenServer 5.0.7 appliance with the latest maintenance packs and drivers, along with the VMware tools preinstalled and optimized for performance.

Customers will have the choice of downloading a version of the OpenServer 5.0.7 appliance or purchasing the appliance on CD. Once obtained, the appliance will import into a VMware environment and then license the product to activate it. The appliance is currently undergoing testing on VMware Workstation and ESX server.

Similar releases for UnixWare 7.1.4 and OpenServer 6.0 will follow shortly after the release of OpenServer 5.0.7V.



"VMware offers an attractive option for the consolidation of existing application servers."

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of comfort and control to your computing experience with the 2-Button USB Entry Mouse from Dell

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CUSTOMER QUOTE

Comments related to ASK's design and implementation of a client's virtual office:
"Thanks to the patience's of Steve Callahan and Mike everything is working perfectly. ASK did a great job providing us the latest technology in terms of access to voice, data and video. It's as close as I can get to being there."

Pamela Meaney, Regional Sales Director Southeast Region
STEEL CITY VACUUM CO., INC., Pittsburgh, PA.