



## White Paper

### Technology and small business: Why should you care?

#### Nortel solutions

From networks to applications, award-winning Nortel business communications solutions meet the unique requirements, challenges and budgets of small to medium-sized businesses:

- > **Convergence solutions** deliver advanced voice and data services over one easy-to-manage IP network.
- > **Data networking solutions** support on-site and inter-site connectivity for telephony, email and Internet access.
- > **Mobility solutions** free people from their desks, and let communications go wherever the work goes.
- > **Security solutions** protect network integrity and privacy, even as communications traverse public networks and the Internet.
- > **Telephony solutions** make it more convenient and productive than ever to connect with colleagues and customers.

More than 15 million small and medium business users around the world depend on Nortel. You can too. We can bring the power of IP, wireless networking, network security and the latest in voice technology to your business.

If you are like many small businesses, you may be overwhelmed by a plethora of technologies that all claim to grow your business, reduce your expenses, improve customer service and enhance employee productivity. After all, your focus is on the day-to-day business, whether you are consumer service oriented (e.g., a retailer, restaurateur, motel operator), knowledge worker focused (e.g. a law office, software developer, advertising agency, real estate agency) or in the wholesale product or service business.

Let's look at four important technologies which could make a difference for your business.

#### 1. Getting closer to your customers

In increasingly fragmented markets, it's more difficult than ever to grow or even retain your customer base. The Web has become an important way to reach existing and new customers. Yet, the Web cuts out the personal touch in customer service.

As businesses of all sizes seek to evolve from the reactive "call me if you need me" model of customer service to a more proactive "we're here to delight you" model, they are increasingly moving to more comprehensive telephony handling capabilities to ensure that customer requests are handled promptly and in the most effective fashion.



If you are having trouble managing customer emails, voicemails and faxes, unified messaging may be just what you need. Unified messaging captures all your voicemails and faxes in your email inbox. This allows you to visually select the most important ones to review, without having to listen to each message in a serial fashion. As a busy business owner, you can work more efficiently to respond to your customers, by accessing your unified inbox from any touchtone phone, PC, laptop or PDA.

## 2. Staying connected on the move

Many small businesses make extensive use of cell phones to meet their mobility needs. But these often do not meet the needs for on-site mobility for data applications and are expensive if off-site mobility is not a requirement (as in the case of a retail or nursing application).

If you want to increase the on-site mobility of your people, you can deploy a wireless LAN and use telephony-enabled laptops and PDAs or wireless LAN handsets to stay connected. Staying connected ensures that time and distance do not become barriers to better customer service and more productive communications.

When away from your office, you can connect your telephony-enabled laptop or PDA via wireless LAN hotspots in coffee shops, via an Ethernet jack in hotel rooms, and via DSL or cable modem connections at home. Just login to your office system, and you can make and receive calls and have access to all the same features you are used to in the office. As a result, you can avoid toll charges, reduce the dependence on calling cards, reduce cell phone minutes and get broadband connectivity for data

to boot. This radically redefines the meaning of the work to something you do, not somewhere you go.

## 3. The new IP Telephony model

It all started with Internet technologies that now permeate not only the public Internet, but are now the foundation for networks run by businesses. Internet technologies include the Internet Protocol (IP), the lingua franca of networking, underlying wired and wireless Ethernet networks, as well as IP Telephony. IP Telephony leverages IP network connectivity to virtualize the phone system. IP phones can be anywhere there is an Ethernet plug, and that includes work-at-home users. The immediate benefits are obvious: one network to wire, build, operate and secure; as compared to separate data and voice networks. Furthermore, if you have multiple sites, connecting these over broadband access (e.g. using DSL) can save you big bucks. You can even have a phone system in one site provide dialtone in your other sites, or outsource your telephony system to a managed service provider (e.g. a VAR or service provider).

## 4. A telephone is not just a telephone

With IP Telephony, new functionality is being delivered that is not traditionally associated with telephones. In fact, your PC could become a phone by adding a bit of software and a headset. In addition, IP phones with multiline displays not only provide a friendlier way of accessing telephony features, but can also be used to access applications. For example, visual voicemail allows you to see a list of your voice messages, and have the ability to select the most important ones to review. During message

playback, you can play, pause and rewind using labeled softkeys on your phone rather than having to remember cryptic codes (e.g. '76' to delete a message). Push-to-talk is another neat example that enables a person using an IP phone to immediately connect with and talk to other users, including those on wireless LAN handsets, while zone Paging enables users to page through groups of phones in specific zones without the expense of installing an overhead paging system.

## Is there an opportunity for you?

Technology is not an end in itself. Can the new IP Telephony model enhance your operations? Can PC phones work for you? What about contact center technologies that are now affordable by smaller companies? Are your employees often away from the office or do they need to stay connected as they roam around your stocking room? If you rely on a lot of faxes, would you be able to manage these better through unified messaging? Looking at these opportunities should help you understand how to use technology as a business advantage.

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