Access One Case Study

Access One Builds Better Business Communications with Metaswitch

metaswitch

Executive Summary

After initially reselling Hosted PBX services, Access One selected Metaswitch Networks to supply a broad range of business communications services. Metaswitch has proven to be a strong partner as it has provided technical and marketing support to quickly help Access One achieve superior profitability and a platform from which it delivers the quality of experience its clients have come to expect.

About Access One

Access One is a Chicago-based managed service provider focused on the telephony, data and managed IT needs of mid-sized businesses. Access One has been selling business services for over 20 years, evolving to a comprehensive product portfolio including MPLS broadband connectivity, data center services, SIP Trunking, Hosted PBX and UC, and managed security. Its target market is primarily business customers in the Chicagoland area, but also nationwide.

Since its inception, Access One has focused on providing the best customer experience in business technology and communication services. This "high touch", personalized service model has allowed it to differentiate itself from the competition and maintain a loyal and growing customer base.

The Opportunity

Access One recognized the value of adding Hosted PBX services to its customers and prospects and initially decided to resell from a provider and white-label a Hosted PBX solution.

Within six months of offering the service, Access One quickly realized it had a winner on its hands. Demand was strong – both direct reps and agents were effectively selling the solution, and customers clearly saw the cost benefits and flexibility that a hosted system could deliver. It was also highly complementary to its other solutions, particularly its data and managed services offerings. In addition, it created an opportunity to reconnect with existing customers and upsell Hosted PBX and UC as a new product offering.

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With demand for the service validated and based on projected sales volume, the business case was clear to move forward with a fully Access One owned-and-operated Business Communications solution that could not only allow for the migration of its existing voice customers with legacy offerings, but also serve as the foundation of an extensive new suite of cloud-based telephony and Unified Communications solutions.

According to Rick Wagner, Vice President of Engineering for Access One, "The economics of building versus reselling a white-box offering based on leased infrastructure quickly became quite clear. Given the demand, we knew we could rapidly make a return on our investment rather than sharing revenue as a reseller. We also wanted to be more hands on with the platform. As a reseller, we couldn't deliver the support and quality of experience that we desired. Investing in the right platform gives us a greater level of control to more efficiently diagnose and troubleshoot quality-affecting issues."

When evaluating a solution, Access One's requirements were:

- A best-in-breed platform that can deliver all of the PBX and Unified Communications features its customers need
- A rapid implementation timeline to quickly move from the existing wholesale relationship for cost and ease of management purposes

Also critical was the level of ongoing support that would be provided. "Access One has a reputation in the market as a provider of superior customer service," said John Hoehne, Chief Operating Officer at Access One. "Choosing a provider that could give us a great product and ongoing support was critical to us."

After analyzing various competitive options, Access One chose Metaswitch to deliver its next-generation UC platform. "Although we were reselling from a wholesale cloud voice provider, there were things about Metaswitch that we felt other providers couldn't deliver," said Hoehne. "We loved the user experience we could offer our customers, as well as all of the diagnostic tools available to us."

With that decision, the race was on. Access One wanted to be actively selling and provisioning on the new platform in less than five months.

The Implementation

The go-to-market requirements were two-fold. One was to get the platform operational and ready for customers. The second was the go-to-market execution – developing everything needed to get Access One ready to effectively sell and support customers.

System Implementation

Given the relatively short time frame required to implement an entirely new IP-based infrastructure, Metaswitch had to aggressively manage the deployment process. A project manager was assigned to lead the effort, working cross-functionally across both Metaswitch and Access One to keep the project on track. Ultimately, everything was delivered on schedule and the Metaswitch technical support teams worked closely with Access One to install, test, and commission the platform.

To accelerate deployment of its new HPBX and UC capabilities, Access One adopted Metaswitch's Hosted PBX Reference Architecture, which recommends a platform configuration and partner equipment that has been pre-tested and certified by Metaswitch.

"The reference architecture was very helpful to get us to market quickly and with confidence," reflects Rick Wagner. "From the Adtran CPE to the Polycom VVX phones to the templates designed to reduce the provisioning of users on the platform, Metaswitch provided clear, reliable guidance."

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Metaswitch's MarketVisions Team developed Access One's library of collateral and online content, including imagery, datasheets, user guides, and videos.

Market Implementation

The MarketVisions marketing support team at Metaswitch was brought in to lead the market execution effort. The effort involved three key areas to get Access One ready for a product launch:

Pricing and Packaging

Using the Metaswitch Hosted PBX Reference Architecture as a baseline, Metaswitch recommended a pricing and packaging approach that was both competitively priced and easy to sell and implement. To support the recommendation, a competitive analysis was conducted both from a feature parity and price point perspective. A business case was developed to ensure the pricing met corporate financial goals.

Collateral and Online Content

As part of the launch, Access One wanted to develop an extensive library of collateral to support the sales process. This included a primary sales "leave behind" along with a number of additional collateral pieces that go into greater detail on specific product components. In addition to the sales collateral, Metaswitch developed a portfolio of customer support documents, including quick start guides, manuals, and video tutorials.

Sales Execution

Lastly, Metaswitch developed a sales training program for Access One sales personnel. This training encompassed not only learning about all the features and capabilities they can offer, but also how to effectively target, qualify, and sell Hosted PBX.

Bringing it all together is a product website that details all of the product attributes and support materials. Here, Metaswitch worked within Access One's existing website and implemented a Hosted PBX section. The section is rich in content, including customized videos and downloadable white papers.

The Net Result

With the platform up and running and all the go-to-market tasks complete, Access One was ready to launch its Metaswitch-based Hosted PBX offering to the marketplace in less than 150 days. Its first customer was a 500+ seat deployment spanning multiple locations.

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Working hand-in-hand with Access One, Metaswitch helped ensure the implementation was a success. "Metaswitch really delivered on both fronts—technology and marketing," said Tom Turner, Vice President of Sales at Access One. "Not only do we have a great product that our customers love, but Metaswitch really helped us quickly prepare to meet the market demand, with marketing materials, website design, and comprehensive sales training."

With a growing pipeline and plans to rapidly move customers from its wholesale platform to Metaswitch, Access One is already reaping the benefits of its investment.