



Partner: ComputerTalk

Web Site:

www.computer-talk.com

Partner Size: 60 employees

Country or Region: North America

Industry: Professional services—IT services

Partner Profile

Toronto-based ComputerTalk designs, deploys, and supports contact center solutions, serving hundreds of clients in North America and the United Kingdom.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Office
 - Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2
 - Microsoft Office Communicator 2007 R2
 - Microsoft Office Live Meeting
 - Microsoft Office Outlook 2007
 - Microsoft Office Project Server 2007
 - Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007

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Software Vendor Boosts Productivity for Contact Centers with Unified Communications

“We’re breaking down the boundaries between the contact center and the enterprise. With ice software and Office Communications Server 2007 R2, the enterprise itself becomes a communications engine.”

Mandle Cheung, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, ComputerTalk

Independent software vendor (ISV) ComputerTalk integrated its contact-center software with Microsoft® Office Communications Server 2007 R2. With this solution, the ISV’s clients gain presence awareness for their agents, as well as new IM and video capabilities beyond existing voice and e-mail channels. Now ComputerTalk can use this unified communications solution to help its clients to increase productivity, efficiency, and ultimately, customer satisfaction.

Business Needs

Founded in 1987, ComputerTalk is an independent software vendor (ISV) and Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner that provides contact-center products and services worldwide. Its contact center product—known by the brand name **ice**—works with technologies from a variety of private branch exchange (PBX) vendors.

ComputerTalk finds its goals align especially well with those of Microsoft. “Bringing together e-mail, instant messaging, voice communications, and Web conferencing is a matter of productivity and competitiveness. We recognize the enormous potential of this

convergence in the market, and so does Microsoft,” says Mandle Cheung, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of ComputerTalk.

The ISV’s clients want to increase the productivity and efficiency of their contact and service centers and find solutions with support for multiple contact channels. They want to use both standard telephony and voice over IP (VoIP) services. In addition, they seek automated services and workflows; integrations with customer relationship management (CRM) software; public instant messaging (IM) systems; and administrative tools.

Solution

ComputerTalk recently integrated **ice** with Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2 to add new features and enhancements to its software and address its clients' needs. ComputerTalk offers up to 18 different modules that include everything from a comprehensive multichannel contact center to speech interactive voice response (IVR) and e-mail routing.

The **ice** contact center provides computer telephony integration and multi-channel contacts by phone, fax, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), and Web chat. Available as SaaS or CPE, it also supports both standard telephony and VoIP using standards-compliant session initiation protocol (SIP) for multimedia communication sessions. The **ice** software includes an intuitive graphical designer, which customers can use to quickly create their own workflows. Embedded predictive dialing allows for effective outbound campaigns. **ice** also integrates with third party applications like Workforce Management and CRM software, such as Microsoft Dynamics® CRM 4.0, giving contact-center agents an in-depth view of customers' purchase and service histories.

The **ice** software seamlessly blends self-service options with agent-assisted service. By integrating **ice** with Office Communications Server 2007 R2, ComputerTalk clients gain presence awareness—the ability to see when and how other users of the communications system are available for communication—and several other capabilities, including call management.

The integration with Microsoft Office Communicator gives users the ability to place, hold, and transfer calls, as well as consult with others, conference, and manage multiple simultaneous calls. Calls can be placed directly from the Microsoft Office Outlook®

communication and collaboration client. IM sessions can also be placed into queues and routed to the correct experts within the enterprise.

Because ComputerTalk shares many of the same needs as its clients, in January 2009 it began deploying the integrated solution in-house before offering it to clients.

ComputerTalk employees also use Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007 for document sharing and Microsoft Office Project Server for managing all customer and internal projects. For Web conferencing, the company uses Microsoft Office Live Meeting. These are the types of integrations that can benefit the company's customers, too.

Benefits

ComputerTalk has gained so many benefits from its deployment that it is looking forward to providing the new unified communications solution to its clients. The integrated solution is improving productivity and service, and it is evolving into something greater. "We're breaking down the boundaries between the contact center and the enterprise," says Cheung. "With **ice** software and Office Communications Server 2007 R2, any expert in the company can help serve customers."

- **Increases productivity.** Contact-center agents can view and manage customer contacts from multiple channels all on one screen. The support for IM sessions in Office Communications Server 2007 R2 means that public and private IM sessions can be managed as easily as voicemail and email communications. And with presence awareness, agents and administrators can not only see at a glance who is available to

communicate with the customer, but on what channels they are available, and when their availability might change. As a result, communications are more efficient and the time spent trying to reach contacts is reduced, leading to increased productivity. The chat capability is especially important. With the integrated solution, agents can participate in multiple chat interactions at once, serving more customers in the same period of time. "Depending on the nature of the contact center, agent productivity can be increased by as much as 300 percent when you consider the potential of single-contact resolution," says Cheung.

- **Improves customer service.** Customers can use the **ice** workflow designer to improve service by creating interactive self-service applications for voice, IM, and e-mail. Workflows also control routing of these contacts, so that they can be directed to the groups or individuals best qualified to serve the customer. First-call resolution is improved by 20–40 percent when ready access to experts is paired with a profile of each customer provided by CRM software. Such enhanced service gives companies a competitive advantage by building customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- **Extends contact center.** Experts on particular customers, technologies, and practices are distributed throughout the organization, and can be leveraged to provide customers with assistance. By using voice mail, e-mail, and IM queuing, inquiries can be routed to the most available expert without overwhelming any one individual. Inquiries can also be

tracked, monitored, and reported on to ensure a quality service level for both internal and external clients.

ComputerTalk will soon provide a Web-based IM component for an anonymous user to enter into a chat. For example, if a customer clicks a Chat Now button on a company Web site, the IM could be funneled to any company expert, again breaking down the boundaries between the contact center and the organization as a whole.

- **Enhances communications with new capabilities.** The latest release of Office Communications Server 2007 also offers enriched audio and video capabilities that are flexible and extend communications choices. "Enterprise voice gives users access to advanced call routing from Office Communicator, as well as a portable VoIP phone that works anywhere they have an Internet connection. The improved voice quality means that we can offer true remote contact center agent capabilities to users of Office Communicator 2007 R2. Conversations can be seamlessly moved from IM, to voice, to video conference." says Dennis Menard, Chief Technology Officer, ComputerTalk. "The latest release also makes it a snap for businesses to take advantage of video with **ice**, so agent interactions can be enriched with video."
- **Delivers more value.** The new desktop-sharing feature of Office Communications Server 2007 R2 is valuable for collaborating with team members in other geographic locations, particularly when it is used with other Microsoft software. For example, a team member can log on to a SharePoint site

and use presence awareness to see which team members are available. The member can send an IM to invite those who are available to a Web conference and then share his or her desktop with the others to help complete a project faster.

- **Provides a solid foundation for growth.** ComputerTalk appreciates how easy its solution can be extended. For example, it plans to take advantage of Microsoft Office Communicator Mobile to provide mobile workers with the same services that employees use in-house. "The future of communications is anytime, anyone, anywhere, any device," says Cheung.