MAPLESOFT CONSULTING
CASE STUDY

Scalable unified communications for a fast growing, widely dispersed company

MITEL®
Simply Communicating®

COMPANY

Maplesoft Consulting, leading professional services and solutions company based in Ottawa, Canada with offices in Canada and the U.S.

CHALLENGE

Integrate communications to let multiple locations and dispersed consultants provide exceptional service to customers.

SOLUTION

- Mitel Communications Suite (MCS) on a Sun Server
- Mitel Unified IP Client Advanced for Sun Ray™
- Mitel IP Sets (Mitel 5330 IP Phone, Mitel 5340 IP Phone)
- Mitel Unified Communicator® (UC) Advanced, including:
  - Mitel Softphone
  - Mitel Dynamic Extension
  - Mitel Knowledge Management
- Mitel TeleCollaboration Solution

RESULTS

- Integrated voice and data communications
- Virtualized network access for employees and consultants
- Simplified IT management and better security with centralized applications and data storage
- Ability to quickly expand and get new employees up to speed
- Natural, intuitive telecollaboration with document and whiteboard sharing
- Seamless communications access to all employees on any device
- Context-sensitive CRM with incoming calls
- Significant operational savings

How can a team that does business globally work together as though in the same building? Today's economic and technological realities answer: virtually.

"The promise of the virtual workplace is finally a reality," says Jack Gulas, Vice President, Maplesoft Technology. With lifelike telecollaboration, a phone number that follows you everywhere, and LAN access from any hotel, airport or coffee shop, Maplesoft Consulting is now able to shrink distances, simplify management and solidify teams.

Headquartered in Ottawa, Canada, Maplesoft Consulting has 70 employees and 300 consultants providing technology, management and staffing solutions to clients in government, telecommunications, healthcare, law, energy, utilities, sports and finance around the world. The company recently expanded into Calgary, Alberta and St. Louis, Missouri, and is planning an office in Toronto, Ontario. Many consultants travel frequently and work from home offices.

But Maplesoft doesn't let multiple locations hinder its main focus: seamless, tailored customer service. "Internally, we are leveraging the best available technology to let us focus on our customer relationships," says Gulas.

Gulas characterizes Maplesoft culture as fast-paced and energetic. Employees are thought of as partners with an active role in the growth of the company. The company's technology infrastructure supports that mindset by enabling maximum productivity and idea sharing.

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Expansion drives need for standard

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Before implementing Mitel® solutions, the office network consisted of a diverse mesh of technologies, including a Nortel switch and some Cisco, Avaya and other traditional Voice over IP products.

There was no common denominator among systems, according to Gulas. "We were maintaining dial tone, nothing more." Another issue was travel. Consultants often work at client sites, and employees were travelling frequently to the new branch offices just to get everyone up to speed on company culture and processes. "In these times, both the reality and the optics of frequent travel make it something to avoid."

Unified communications

To bring together people and places, Maplesoft had to unify systems. Fortunately, with the merging of telephony and data technologies, the market finally offered truly unified communications. The company's first step was to roll out VoIP to all employees. Mitel Communications Suite (MCS), running on Maplesoft's Sun Server, provides VoIP call control and powers the company's entire communication platform.

Next came Mitel Unified IP Client for Sun Ray™, developed through a strategic partnership between Mitel and Sun Microsystems. With Mitel Unified IP Client for Sun Ray, employees use any Sun Ray thin client and their own Java card to access their personal desktops and four-digit phone extensions, stored centrally on Sun servers.

Mitel Unified IP Client for Sun Ray is a key technology for rapid growth, according to Gulas. "Centralized tools, virtualized on employee terminals, simplify the management of our platform. The sooner we can ramp up a user, an office or a branch, the sooner we can ensure a harmonized approach to our service."

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Mitel is helping us strengthen that culture.
Technology is driving efficiency and letting
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UC Advanced soft client
provides virtual presence

Maplesoft used Mitel Unified IP Client for Sun Ray to virtualize and centralize the company data and communications network. It then deployed Mitel Unified Communicator (UC) Advanced to take this one step further, allowing a wide range of virtual work solutions.

The UC Advanced Softphone, a desktop phone that runs on a PC, combined with the Mitel Teleworker Solution provides the same access to a desktop and phone extension, but through a laptop and Internet connection. It allows Maplesoft remote workers to be virtually present and available on the company network by simply calling their four-digit extensions from any Wi-Fi hot spot—coffee shop, home office, airport lounge. They can hold conference calls, access files, chat with other employees, and drag and drop documents for sharing.

Jack Gulas believes people are actually performing better despite being on the road. "Our company culture is based on excellent service. Mitel is helping us strengthen that culture. Technology is driving efficiency and letting us be even more client focused."

Other UC Advanced features rolled out include Dynamic Extension and Knowledge Management. Maplesoft is also using the Mitel TeleCollaboration Solution integrated with UC Advanced. With the remote offices and executives as early adopters, the end point is to give every employee and consultant access to these tools, whether in the office or at home.

Anywhere calling creates a virtual corporate network

Through another feature of UC Advanced, Mitel Dynamic Extension, Maplesoft consultants can add any external number, such as a cell phone, to a ring group on the company network, defining how to route calls based on their status. This lets the company better manage mobile costs by reducing roaming charges. Employees and consultants can give preferential treatment to certain callers, and can use any phone to make and receive calls as though they were at their desk.

"Our business is built on having direct and immediate contact with our clients," says Gulas. "Mitel Dynamic Extension lets our clients reach our executives with one phone call, whether they are at one of our multiple locations or doing business in Dubai."

The sales engineering team is an ideal adopter. Depending on customer requirements, the team lead needs to quickly reach the relevant engineers, wherever they may be, to begin planning a response.

Being prepared: Knowledge Management

With many calls from different clients coming in throughout the day, Maplesoft consultants can provide personalized service through the Knowledge Management feature of UC Advanced. When a client calls, this feature automatically pulls up any emails or files associated with that individual.

Says Gulas, "We value our customer relationships to the extent that we want to know how they like their coffee. Knowledge Management boosts that CRM. No more searching for reference documents when I'm on the phone—they're on my screen before I even answer."

Telecollaboration
shrinks the distance

With clients all over the world, Maplesoft was no stranger to the videoconferences of old: connection issues, dropped participants, broken images and unnatural pauses. You had to call IT to set it up, and again to fix it when it broke down.

According to Jack Gulas, the intuitive Mitel TeleCollaboration Solution finally provides a valid alternative to travel. "It's as simple as making a phone call. All of the details contribute to the feeling of being in the same room: the natural eye contact, the high-definition picture, the three-panel format, the round table feel, the interactive whiteboard, the sharing of documents at the click of a mouse. Five minutes into the meeting we forget that we're thousands of kilometres apart."

Not being a big company with big bandwidth pipes, Maplesoft benefits from the lower (2.5Mb) bandwidth requirements of the Mitel TeleCollaboration Solution. The company avoids expensive bandwidth guarantees while getting flawless video and audio service. "Exactly what a small company needs at the right cost, with room for growth."

In fact, the telecollaboration solution was cost neutral within three months, cancelling out six trips between Ottawa and Calgary. "The way we look at it, we now travel to Calgary every day through telecollaboration, so our office interaction is much improved. As a means of communication, it's addictive."

A solution that starts small and grows

While a small company may not stay small forever, big company solutions and prices are still out of reach. After considering Cisco and Nortel, Maplesoft found Mitel functionality and price models perfectly suited to the company's current size and needs. But more important was the easy scaling in proportion to growth.

When choosing the telecollaboration solution, Maplesoft asked four questions: Is it easy to use? Is it cost effective? Do I need to bring in more bandwidth? And can I really collaborate like I was there? Mitel was the only company that could answer a clear 'yes' to all four questions.

Although the company deployed Mitel UC Advanced as a new technology, Maplesoft found it to be rock solid and based on strong R&D. As early adopters, the company has enjoyed "tremendous visibility and support" from Mitel. "After our successes with the whole Mitel suite, we'll look at anything new they might throw at us," says Gulas. "If it improves our productivity, we're interested. As we've seen, it pays off well beyond the expense."

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