

Intel vPro Enables SMEs' Intelligent Office

Case Study

Intel® Xeon® processor, Intel® Centrino® 2 processor technology, Intel® Core™2 processor with vPro™ technology

Intelligent Office

With a solution powered by Intel, Intelligent Office is now able to offer reliable IT infrastructure and support that small businesses need to grow.



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| Challenge | Provide small businesses with affordable top-quality IT infrastructure and support. |
| Solution | Intel® Xeon® processor, Intel® Centrino® 2 processor technology, Intel® Core™2 processor with vPro™ technology |

Summary

Investing in office space can be a costly expense for a small business, but Intelligent Office makes having top quality space, support staff and IT infrastructure affordable. With PCS/Ceres Technology Group providing remote network support using Intel vPro technology, Intelligent Office offers the reliability companies need to grow.

Challenge

For small businesses looking to grow, the decision to move from home office space to leased space is a big and costly step. When Brian Monteith started looking for a new business to launch, he realized there was a market opportunity in offering full service, quality office space to this growing group of business owners.

Enter Intelligent Office*, a franchise business that caters to mobile professionals and small businesses by offering quality reception, voice mail, Class A office space and sales support.



"I really fell in love with the business, and when I started doing research for Canada, I realized there was not a true virtual office company in Canada where 90% of their business is dedicated to remote professionals," he said. In 2005, Monteith opened the first Canadian Intelligent Office location in North York, and one year later became Canada's master franchisor to expand locations in Canada.

"I realized there was strong enough demand for the concept not only in Toronto but also across Canada," he says. "I see an opportunity for business owners who want to use a main office location but who may also need to travel and have access to the same quality space in other cities."

In addition to the small and medium business (SMB) market, Monteith has found that larger companies are equally interested in Intelligent Office. With companies seeking to trim expenses, eliminating real estate costs while providing a quality work space for remote workers is appealing.

For the concept to catch on, Monteith needs to ensure every Intelligent Office franchise location features top quality office space, professional support staff and an infrastructure that is reliable to meet the demands of customers and the franchise owners who might not be technically savvy.

When Monteith first signed up with Intelligent Office, there was no ability to monitor computers or servers remotely, which could mean downtime if servers or computers stopped working.

He knew a more proactive approach to the management of IT was needed if the franchise was to grow as he envisioned.

Solution

Intelligent Office's franchise head office partnered with Productive Computer Solutions/Ceres Technology Group, inc* (PCS) of Boulder, Colorado, to help roll out a consistent technology framework for all its locations. This included all the sales and service of hardware, software and cabling for each new location. Before PCS, Intelligent Office franchise owners could pick and choose their cabling and infrastructure installation suppliers which resulted in inconsistent service delivery to clients, and costly time or budget over-runs. With a single provider, the inconsistencies were eliminated and service delivery improved.

"In the first year, the only thing new franchisees should be thinking about is new clients," says PCS Vice President Darrin LeBlanc. "We look after everything from cabling to network set up and support. We also help set up specific customer services as needed to allow franchise owners to focus exclusively on growth."

The concept also saves money. Since every location is wired identically, PCS teams can get an office wired, software implemented, install the office's new servers with Intel Xeon processors and set-up

desktop computers fully configured for remote management using Intel® Core™ 2 processor with vPro™ technology. In addition, they can do it faster than other suppliers because the configuration of every Intelligent Office location is the same.

To allow that high level of support, PCS depends on the Intel Core 2 processor with vPro technology, coupled with network management made possible by software from Level Platforms*. With vPro technology from Intel, PCS can monitor the status of the entire network from their own office, remotely troubleshoot issues on individual PCs and even solve network issues before the customers know about it.

"We started activating Intel vPro technology for our clients' computers before they even knew what it could do. Anything that can reduce the number of times we have to go out to a site, allows us to serve our customers better," recalls LeBlanc. "We want to sell things we know we can support and we know we can support a machine with Intel vPro technology inside when it's at a customer site."

- Darrin LeBlanc, PCS Vice President

When a new Intelligent Office is getting ready to open, PCS outfits each office with three to four workstations, a notebook and dedicated servers to handle administration and voicemail. A team from PCS comes into the building, does the original install of the hardware, cabling, VOIP-ready phone system and ensures all systems from PCs to servers and network connections are working seamlessly. All hardware is powered by Intel® which gives PCS consistent quality, and the remote access capability they need to support Intelligent Offices in more than 48 locations across Canada and the United States.

"The new IT set up process is more user friendly for new franchisees coming on board," says Monteith. "It's a quicker and easier process than before. We weren't using Intel vPro technology when I started the business but now all locations are using it. It's also easier for our franchisees because we don't need to have an IT person physically in the office to make changes, it can all be done remotely. PCS tells me when we have issues, often before I even know there could be a problem."

For Monteith, knowing his technology is being managed and proactively supported by PCS, who uses industry leading technology, means peace of mind. "Intel has a great name and is industry standard, which makes getting parts and service easy. It was a great decision to have Intel as our provider."

"The fact is franchisees don't have to think about technology. They can focus on signing up new clients and leave the technical details to us," adds LeBlanc, noting that when a new customer signs up, PCS can set up the voicemail, email, programming key cards, and other software requirements quickly from their Colorado location. Using remote access enabled by Intel vPro technology allows PCS to teach franchise owners and staff the steps needed to get customers enrolled and accessing the full range of services. PCS can also provide back up support as they are learning the process. LeBlanc adds that they can also roll out specialized services that depend on technology for these new customers, allowing owners a wider range of services they can sell.

Key Advantages

For Monteith, the advantages are simple: The solution works.

"The remote management made possible by Intel vPro technology and PCS has absolutely helped me build my business in Canada," says Monteith. "Since we are handling IT infrastructure on a national basis, everything from hardware purchases to cabling offices is more economical. And, with PCS providing remote support, they can log in and maintain systems remotely without physically being there. When a location opens up and they start to sign up new clients, PCS is also there to help program the switches, security, voicemail and gets it all done fast."

"I would not be able to do it on a national level without this kind of support and remote access," adds Monteith. "It would cost me more to manage or expand to new locations."

What that means to Monteith is a significant reduction in overhead. Without PCS and Intel vPro technology, he would need to hire IT staff for each city to ensure franchise owners have the support they need.

"Prospective franchisees talk to existing location owners. If there were issues with downtime or support, I would be in big trouble because people would look elsewhere for a business," says Monteith. "I think the main benefit is franchise owners can sign up a new customer, program all their access codes and have them up and running with a full range of services fast."

Remote Access Speeds Service Delivery To Clients

For a client like Intelligent Office, having remote access to fix problems means consistent delivery of services, whether the office is in New York, Toronto or Calgary.

"With Intel vPro technology allowing seamless remote access, we can support a customer anywhere. We don't need a local presence but if we do need local representation, we can connect with another Intel channel partner if needed," says LeBlanc, noting this technology has opened up business opportunities to expand their client base beyond Boulder, CO.

"With Intel vPro technology, we can remotely update software and virus protection without the office knowing that updates are being done. We have called an office about an alert we see on our screens before the office is even aware of the issue. This takes a lot of stress off franchisees," says LeBlanc, noting that the technology allows remote management whether the PC is powered up or not. "To be more successful, franchisees need to simply focus on customers and not on technological issues. We have taken that part away."

For Monteith, the remote access capability keeps clients happy. "It takes minutes to program a new number and voicemail. Our clients are grateful that if an issue arises with their voicemail box or even our PBX phone switch, PCS can log in and fix it in minutes. It is peace of mind."

An added benefit as a business owner has been that PCS can monitor Internet usage and remotely remove unauthorized software on any Intelligent Office machine that could impact their system

Information At Reception's Fingertips

Unlike many other executive suites, Intelligent Offices have a team of receptionists: two at the front desk, and the others in a call centre area. The phone system is integrated into their computer network allowing all receptionists access to the scripts and customer data on a single screen with links to external web sites, E-commerce pages or calendars.

"Our phones are all answered using the computers, and when a line rings, all the information about our client's company pops up on all reception screens simultaneously," explains Monteith. "It is very important we have reliable and proper delivery of services. Our lifeblood is our phones system and contact screens, which are running on our servers. They just have to work."

The phones are networked through Intelligent Office's server, powered by Intel® Xeon® processors, which gives Monteith the speed and reliability he needs. The computer-based call system helps reduce training costs and increases the efficiency of the receptionist's role.

"The first available receptionist can answer any call for any customer because all the information they need is right there on the screen," he says, adding the computer screens also allow receptionists to conduct services for the clients such as booking appointments in a shared calendar, taking sales orders and even processing credit card transactions.

Making Mobility Easy

Extending the concept of an increasingly mobile workforce, customers of Intelligent Office can use any franchise location by simply booking through their home office. "It's a cost-effective way to extend your footprint without spending money on leases, overhead or rent," explains Monteith, who has also found a niche with larger companies looking for quality office space for mobile workers.

"People are starting to realize they don't need to be physically stuck in an office. They can be anywhere in the world, and we enable that," says Monteith, adding without a solid infrastructure powered by Intel and PCS proactive network management, they wouldn't be able to deliver on promises to customers.

Since the system is automated and all the data stored on Intelligent Office's servers, franchise owners can easily track call volumes and activity logs which are needed for billing to customers.

"There's a lot less room for human error," adds Monteith, who is currently looking at enhancing the integration of their telephone software seamlessly into the billing software to streamline internal processes even further.

Build Business Remotely From Anywhere

Since the operation of Intelligent Office franchises relies heavily on its Intel Xeon processor-based servers, owners can access files, data and even check on the operation from anywhere using wireless connectivity to the office VPN.

Using his notebook featuring Intel® Centrino® 2 processor technology, Monteith can download files, access QuickBooks® for billing and even check security cameras at his facility from any wireless hotspot or hotel wireless network. Monteith can also remotely access the billing software of his franchisees to download reports and data as needed.

For Monteith, the technology enables him to live the lifestyle he is seeking.

"I didn't want to be stuck in one place. I like to travel and work remotely," he says. With his wireless notebook, solid network infrastructure allowing secure remote access, and a business model that works efficiently, he says, the business "runs on its own and has continued to evolve and get better since day one."

- Brian Monteith, Intelligent Office

"It's a turn key solution," says Monteith, adding "I can remote into the administration servers, take a look at the books, log into a shared drive to retrieve data and even look at our security cameras to check on a location."



Monteith says one of his franchisees lives in Toronto, but travels weekly to his franchise location in Ottawa. When he's not on site, he's still connected to the operation as seamlessly as if he were there.

"The current infrastructure powered by Intel will enable me to sell more franchises," says Monteith, noting that solid technology, coupled with the ability to work remotely is a plus for business owners. "It is a very big part of the equation of developing and building the Intelligent Office franchise in Canada."

Future Uses

With an eye to continuing to expand the services being offered to clients, Monteith has partnered with Radiant Communications to create a private gateway for VOIP solutions, as well as allowing customers to use their own VPN access for secure point to point access and data back up.

"We are Voice Over IP ready and will be able to offer that service to clients as well," Monteith says, adding web conferencing services and lower cost point to point calling could all be attractive services for a small business owner.

There are a range of additional services that Monteith sees the potential to implement thanks Radiant's new Multi Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) network. A MPLS network provides secure routing of data or internet traffic to provide high levels of redundant service. This new service will allow customers to access to any Intelligent

Office location using the same codes as they were assigned at their home location, while having all usage data consolidated into a central location for billing. Additionally, clients will be able to access Intelligent Office servers, powered by reliable Intel Xeon processors, through a secure VPN connection. Monteith sees further opportunities to provide clients with remote VOIP services, and even data back up services.

"It's about giving clients more options and access to more and more services that help them expand their business," says Monteith.

For PCS, the experience of leveraging Intel vPro technology for remote management of a facility is opening up new business opportunities to expand globally. LeBlanc sees an opportunity to take care of a company's entire ecosystem from cabling, phones, data, security and access control in one location. "Just as Intel vPro technology enables network management remotely, we can see a time where all devices within an office can have the same high level of remote management capability."

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Intel® Centrino® 2 processor, visit www.intel.com/products/centrino/

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