



Total 3Com solution bolsters counseling center communications

CASE STUDY

Family Service (USA)

Location: Cincinnati, Ohio

Sites: 7

Founded: 1879

Employees: 125

Vertical Industry: Healthcare

Implemented: March 2002

Win Over: Cisco, Avaya

The Challenge

Communications mean everything to Family Service. As providers of counseling services, occupational therapy, and children's programs to more than 34,000 Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky residents each year, the highly regarded social service agency requires reliable, secure communications to sustain its clients' trust and adhere to a range of federal and state regulations.

Until recently, however, Family Service's offices relied on non-integrated, multi-vendor phone systems that delayed the agency's responses to clients' calls and were expensive to maintain. Simple phone moves required a vendor's technician to go on site and cost the agency a minimum of \$75. Moreover, employees had to dial seven or 10 digit phone numbers to reach colleagues at other offices. The phone systems also lacked advanced features such as call transfer and call forwarding.

In addition, the agency's shared Ethernet networks were unable to

rapidly transfer information between offices, forcing therapists and administrators to wait minutes to complete every exchange. The agency lacked adequate security at the Internet portal at its headquarters, which it needed to keep its network safe from prying eyes. Family Service also had no means to filter Internet content to protect the children attending after-school programs at its seven clinics.

Family Service sought a powerful, easy-to-manage and affordable voice, data, and security solution to bolster and safeguard its communications.

The Solution

After evaluating other vendors' products, Family Service authorized its value-added reseller (VAR), Full Service Networking of Cincinnati, to deploy the following 3Com® solution:

- **3Com SuperStack® 3 NBX® Networked Telephony Solution** delivers premium quality, feature-rich, IP-based phone communications over a single wire infrastructure at Family Service's headquarters. This solution can support up to 1000 users.
- **3Com SuperStack 3 Switch 4400** provides a Fast Ethernet network at Family Service's headquarters and prioritizes voice traffic to ensure high quality telephone communications.
- **3Com SuperStack 3 Switch 3300** carries 10/100 Mbps connections to desktops and phones in Family Service's seven clinics.

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- **3Com SuperStack 3 Firewall** provides comprehensive hardware-based security at Family Service’s Internet gateway. The firewall blocks unauthorized network access and enables Family Service to control and monitor staff and clients’ Internet use. Family Service also uses the Web site filter subscription service which provides automated weekly updates to preclude access to inappropriate Internet Web sites and content.
- **3Com Network Supervisor** that provides applications to help manage the network with easy-to-use tools for network monitoring, device control, and fast problem resolution.

The Benefits

Selected for their superior price/performance, management, and security, the 3Com solution has revolutionized Family Service’s communications. The agency is experiencing significant savings- adding to 3Com’s exceptional low total cost of ownership.

At its Cincinnati headquarters, a SuperStack 3 Switch 4400 switch provides a secure, Fast Ethernet backbone and intelligently prioritizes voice traffic, ensuring that every client call receives a prompt, efficient response. The headquarters SuperStack 3 NBX system instantly distributes calls to 125 users at Family Service’s seven sites, while the SuperStack 3 Firewall defends against data theft and hackers. SuperStack 3 Switch 3300s at the agency’s six additional offices extend IP-based phone connections to resident staff and deliver 10/100 Mbps desktop connections.

In addition, Family Service employees today use four-digit extensions to call one another. Clients more easily contact their therapists using direct inward dialing (DID) numbers instead of calling the switchboard. The NBX system’s unique bridged extensions even lets therapists who work in more than one office program their phones

in each office to ring simultaneously, enabling clients to reach them more rapidly. The agency also uses the NBX system’s voicemail for simple paging and off-site notifications, ensuring that calls from distressed clients are always answered promptly.

Now transferring information between offices in seconds, 3Com switches supply the bandwidth to support the agency’s migration from paper to digital patient records. Family Service also uses 3Com switches to deliver the Ohio-mandated Outcomes Management software system to report patients’ progress to the state.

The agency relies on the firewall’s Web content filtering and the 3Com SuperStack 3 Web Site Filter subscription service to supervise Internet access. It will soon use the firewall’s virtual private network (VPN) capabilities to give staff secure, remote access to the agency’s network.

The plug-and-play 3Com voice solution’s browser-based, NBX NetSet™ administration utility lets the agency effortlessly manage its 125 NBX phones in-house without using \$75 per hour contractors. IT staff also use 3Com’s downloadable Network Supervisor to proactively manage clinic networks.

“3Com’s versatile array of products is ideal for a low-tech business like ours that lacks IT resources, yet urgently needs reliable, secure communications,” said Matt Gerald, Family Service network administrator.

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Network Diagram

