Ascend

NetSet Internet Services

User Profile

The explosion of the Internet's popularity a few years ago offered some exciting opportunities for entrepreneurs who could act quickly. In Columbus, Ohio, Scott J. Campbell and Matthew D. Lammers founded NetSet in early 1995 to service the Internet access market for residential and business clients using simple, inexpensive analog modems for dial-in access.

Although the analog solution was initially adequate, NetSet soon found itself faced with a number of hidden costs and reliability issues. By May 1996, the writing was on the wall: quality problems, escalating management requirements and a rising level of customer complaints made it clear that NetSet needed to move to a more robust solution. Turning to Ascend Communications, NetSet opted for a reliable, expandable, cost-effective ISDN solution.

"The analog system really was a very bad situation for us at that point," explains Lammers. "We realized that we were missing significant revenue opportunities and at the same time forcing our customers to go elsewhere for higher speed connections."

Going with the Leader

NetSet chose Ascend because it needed a complete access solution from a vendor with a proven record in network access switch solutions. After a detailed analysis of competitive products, NetSet replaced their Livingston-based analog solution with three Ascend MAX™ 4004 WAN access switches managed by an Ascend Access Control™ RADIUS server. With its support for Multilink PPP, Frame Relay, VPN tunneling and an integrated firewall, the MAX 4004 provided the features they needed, and the assurance that NetSet could expand its solution to accommodate new technologies.

Putting the Pieces Together

NetSet started their analog to digital upgrade with a call to their telephone company, Ameritech. Because of NetSet's desire to offer ISDN services to their customers, they selected ISDN PRI trunk lines for their dial-in access. The lines were ordered, installed and tested over a period of a few months. To support their analog users, the MAX products were also outfitted with a full set of digital modems. Working from the documentation provided, NetSet was able to configure and test the MAX units over a period of a few days and were then ready for the cut-over of their Telco services.

Founded in 1995, NetSet is a full-service ISP offering reliable high-speed Internet connectivity. Based in Columbus, Ohio, the medium-sized ISP prides itself on its high-speed connectivity, reliability and customer service.

The Ascend Solution



MAX 4004

The MAX 4004 is a high-powered, multiprotocol WAN access switch that allows corporations, carriers and service providers to extend their backbone networks to support remote office access, telecommuting and Internet access. By consolidating analog and digital access lines over high-speed digital trunks, the MAX 4004 enhances call performance by maximizing line utilization and minimizing equipment problems. The MAX 4004 can accommodate four T1 lines for up to 96 concurrent sessions.

Ascend Access Control

Ascend Access Control is a RADIUS-based, comprehensive network-wide security management system that lets corporations and service providers manage, control and secure analog as well as digital remote access connections. With Access Control, administrators can identify legitimate callers, perform authentication and authorization, monitor access to network resources and compile extensive billing and accounting details.

"The next day everything was quiet and technical support calls had decreased so dramatically that we wondered if everything was working properly — and it was," says Lammers. "The analog to digital transition had gone off without a hitch!"

The benefits were dramatic. NetSet saw an immediate reduction of its network and customer support burden by more than 50%, and the PRI lines that NetSet installed have saved significant dollars as well, compared to the analog system. And, since the MAX products are virtually maintenance-free, NetSet has been able to continue its rapid growth in customers with little or no additional resources required for the network management and customer service areas. Personnel that were previously tied up with customer service issues were now free to develop new service offerings and other aspects of the business.

Bright Future Ahead

Ascend's ISDN solution has proven to be a shot in the arm for business at NetSet. The ISP has been able to continue to expand its service offering into the ISDN market and is gaining many new customers that are upgrading from analog to ISDN. What's more, with the Frame Relay support from the MAX, NetSet is better able to accommodate the business market's need for Internet access services with higher bandwidth offerings. With network headaches out of the way, Ascend's solution has enabled NetSet to focus on what they do best: taking a leadership role in the Internet revolution.

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