

Grant Thornton takes advantage of total convergence and increases reactivity

Grant Thornton France selects a complete Alcatel voice and data convergence solution

Grant Thornton 

The renowned French accounting and auditing group, Grant Thornton, takes advantage of the total renovation of its communication infrastructure to go for Alcatel IP technology, which brings together security, up-gradable state-of-the-art equipment and cost-savings.

The sixth largest world network of auditing and accounting experts, Grant Thornton in France is the result of the merger of Fidulor and Amyot Exco. With 900 staff members, the group is located in three major sites (Paris, Lille and Lyon), as well as over 27 offices throughout France. An annual turnover of 76 million euros ranks it as the 8th largest accounting firm nationally.

In 2004, when combining the former offices of Fidulor and Amyot Exco in Lille and Paris, Grant Thornton started the complete renovation of its communication system. The project was entrusted to the Information and Communication Technology department. "We had the opportunity to start from scratch," explains Bruno de Lattre, Manager of Information Technology at

Grant Thornton. "Consequently, we were open to many different choices in technologies."

The group began consulting with six integrators including NextiraOne, already present in a number of sites. "The important thing was to study the solutions from the various contractors and choose the provider who mastered

"Alcatel's IP telephony allowed us to cut a third of the connection plugs for each new deployment. But mainly, the Alcatel OmniPCX Enterprise communication server allows our staff to react more quickly and efficiently, thanks to the unified messaging and call by name functions."

Bruno de Lattre, Information Technology Manager at Grant Thornton

Challenges

- Homogenization of the communications infrastructure
- Single administration of telephony and information technology
- Taking off-site mobility requirements into account
- Anticipation of costs for expansion or future moves

Solutions

- 3 Alcatel **OmniPCX Enterprise** communications servers
- Distributed and redundant architecture
- Alcatel **OmniSwitch** 6300 and 6800 data infrastructure
- Alcatel **OmniVista** 4760 management platform
- Alcatel **e-Reflexes** IP Terminals

Benefits

- Reuse existing system at smaller sites
- Control operating costs
- Reduction of a third of deployment costs for new sets
- Increased availability and reliability
- Improved staff efficiency

the proposed technology the best, whether IP or not,” Frédéric Barlet, the manager for calls for tender at Grant Thornton explains.

“Our calculations quickly showed that the deployment of IP telephony at a new site would allow us to cut a third of connections, as both PCs and IP sets share the same connection. This would make the additional cost of this innovative technology very attractive compared to a traditional solution,” Frédéric Barlet emphasizes.

Innovate and consolidate

Bruno de Lattre added: “Upgrading one’s telecommunications installation is not done frequently, therefore not going for Voice over IP now would have meant lagging behind.” Consequently, the final competition was between two offers. “We streamlined the proposals following two major lines beside price: availability and security on the one hand, and functionality and upgradeability on the other.”

The Alcatel voice and data network solution proposed by NextiraOne was eventually chosen because it allows the firm a progressive and inexpensive transition at the smaller sites, not equipped with a PABX, which retain

their traditional sets, to deploy mobile telephony into Wi-Fi later on, or again to adopt unified messaging.

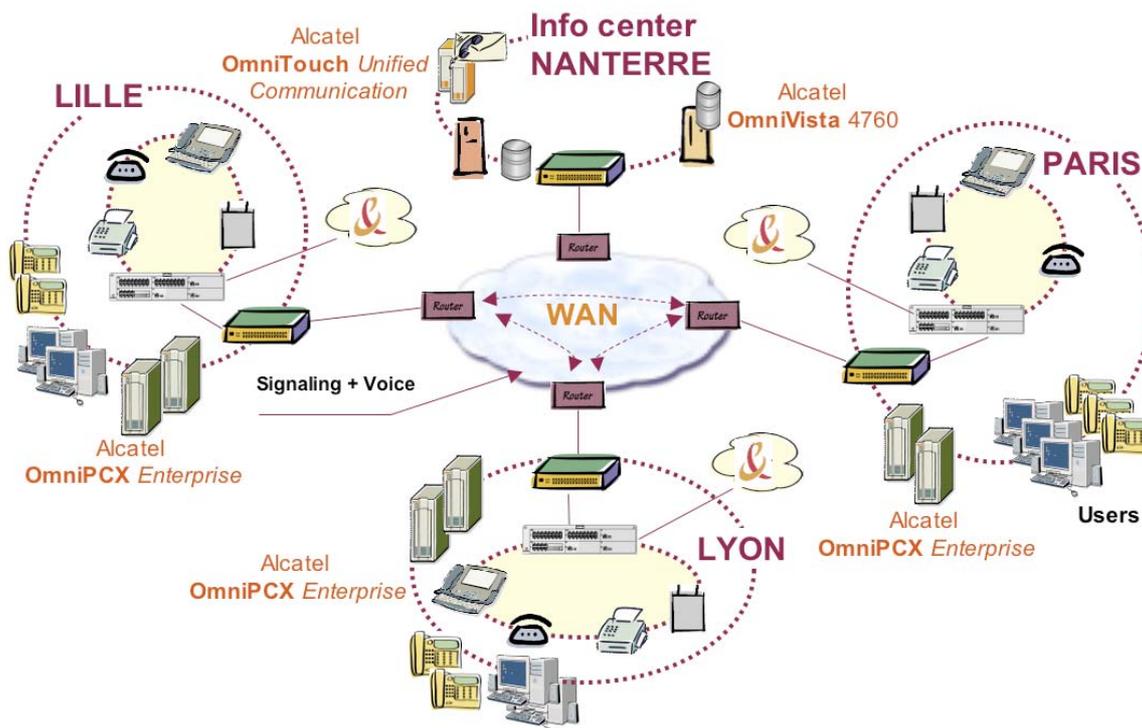
Technically, the sites in Paris, Lille and Lyon, with 320, 120 and 80 users respectively, are each equipped with two redundant Alcatel **OmniPCX Enterprise** communication servers networked together across the extended network (WAN) and supported in computer centers. At the local network level, the Alcatel **e-Reflexes** IP sets benefit from a brand new infrastructure based on Alcatel **OmniSwitch** 6600 and 6300 switches. At these sites, as well as in remote offices, the Alcatel IP Media Gateways connect traditional equipment such as fax, minitels and analogue equipment to the IP **OmniPCX Enterprise** platform.

Controlling telephony costs

“The deployment was successfully achieved, since we were starting from scratch,” Bruno de Lattre explains. From now on staff in Lyon, Lille or Paris accesses the same functions, for example call by name thanks to the integration with the company directory. In order to ensure the greatest efficiency, the Computer Services Dept calls on small groups of users to train and inform other employees to reinforce proper use of this new equipment. “The users quickly learned the call by name feature so well that we are planning to expand it to all staff members,” Frédéric Barlet says enthusiastically.

Giving its priority to innovation and upgradeability, Grant Thornton decided to invest in a 100% Alcatel solution. Thanks to voice/data convergence the company cuts deployment costs and controls operating costs for its new communication platform.

The Alcatel voice and data convergence solution for Grant Thornton



With regard to the switchboard, staff productivity and efficiency have been increased and the unique centralized dialing feature makes administration much easier.

Bruno de Lattre expects even more from the implementation of a unified messaging system before next year: "To have a sole point of entry for three types of messages – voice, emails and fax – will have a clear impact on the productivity of our traveling staff."

The deployment of new IP sets has already made it possible to cut a third of connection and cabling costs. Moreover, supervision and maintenance of the system may be handled by technicians from the IT department using a single tool (Alcatel OmniVista), which manages the administration of both voice and data networks. "We now maintain our own telephone system independently and have reduced the number of intervention teams. With traditional telephony, we had to

"Thanks to the convergence of information technology and telecommunications systems, Grant Thornton saves on deployment costs. And at an application level, the expanded functionalities of its new infrastructure increase staff productivity and efficiency."

Key Accounts Manager for the Rhône Alp Region, Alcatel

keep this budgeting item open. The IP solution from Alcatel now makes it possible for us to better control our communication expenses."

Bolstered by this success, the information technology team is currently implementing the second phase of the project – the connection of other sites to the Alcatel **OmniPCX Enterprise** communication platform. The first of six sites to migrate in 2005, Cergy has just been connected to the Paris server. The operation consisted in installing an Alcatel **OmniPCX Enterprise** IP Media Gateway and Alcatel IP sets from the Alcatel **e-Reflexes** series. This resulted in substantial cost savings.

"Having been involved very early in this effort, Alcatel participated with us in each stage of the tender application. Thanks to their presence, we were able to realize this success at Grant Thornton's together."

Guy Mulatier, Commercial Engineer
Company Manager, NextiraOne France

The role of NextiraOne

NextiraOne, the world's first integrator of telecommunications solutions and Alcatel Business Partner Premium, brings its customers a multidisciplinary, SI-oriented approach. Its experience and skills in IP communications have made NextiraOne the favorite for global projects like that at Grant Thornton's. Thanks to its sales and service teams firmly established all over France, NextiraOne can efficiently satisfy its clients throughout all the deployment phases of its 100% Alcatel voice and data infrastructure.

"This success leads us to consider having not only signaling but also voice transit on our WAN" says Bruno de Lattre. Deployment of Wi-Fi communications which will allow meeting mobility needs on site is another date looked forward to. Wireless IP communications will increase the flexibility and dynamism of many meetings and demonstrations organized by the firm's experts. In the end, Grant Thornton will be equipped with an outstanding "Full IP" solution from Alcatel.

Business Partner Info

NextiraOne (www.nextiraone.com), with head offices in Paris and Houston, Texas, is the world leader in communication services solutions, sold under the LifeCycleSM Services brand. LifeCycle(SM) Services cover the design, deployment, logistical support and operation of voice, data and convergent networks. NextiraOne is an international service enterprise, and also offers consultancy services and solutions intended to ensure the growth of companies, administrations and local communities – from application services for contact centers to subcontracting network infrastructures.

"We chose NextiraOne for its expertise in IP communications and the simplicity of the solution proposed, based on Alcatel OmniPCX Enterprise communication servers. Another determining point was the national presence of the integrator."

Bruno de Lattre, Information Technology
Manager at Grant Thornton