

# Sirtex Medical Limited



## Sirtex Medical Limited Cuts Costs and Avoids PABX with Microsoft Unified Communications System

In the world of medical research, Sirtex Medical Limited is rapidly developing a big reputation. The innovative Australian company specialises in research, development and commercialisation of treatments for liver cancer. Since its world-leading liver therapy was developed in the 1980s, the company has conducted extensive trials and carried out treatments across the globe. The company's therapy has been approved for sale in the highly regulated markets of Europe, the United States and Australia.

Sales are on a continual growth curve and the business is gearing up. Management has estimated there will be a 40 per cent increase in staff numbers within the next twelve months alone.

### Planning for the future

In early 2010 Sirtex Medical Limited was preparing to move into a new Sydney office and IT Manager, John Philip was busy overseeing the fit-out of a new information and communications technology infrastructure. One of his many considerations was how to best meet the company's future telephony requirements.

At the time Sirtex Medical Limited employed approximately 40 staff in Australia and New Zealand, and one hundred employees internationally. Many were sales staff who spent the majority of their time travelling, often working remotely. Rather than purchasing a PABX for the Sydney office, Philip wanted a telephony solution that could manage all of Sirtex Medical Limited's local and international telephone requirements and still cater for the company's growing staff numbers.

"I didn't want to spend \$50,000 to put a big black PABX box on my wall and tie us into old technology. Nor did we want to rely on yet another vendor," Philip explains. He researched the options and found that unified communications – and the concept of melding IT and telephony on a single network - offered the flexibility he was after.



### At a glance

#### Business Objective

A cost-effective, scalable telephony system for Sirtex Medical Limited's growing global business.

#### Solution

- Microsoft Unified Communications
- Microsoft Office Communications Server

#### Business Benefits

- An estimated \$50,000 saving by not installing a PABX
- An estimated 75% reduction in international call costs
- No charge for intra-office phone calls
- Ability to see availability and status of staff, regardless of location

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### Growth, cost savings and fewer vendors

"Unified communications would allow us to grow as much as we like without incurring more costs. New staff could be added to the system easily, as necessary. Because it would use our existing network, it also meant we would have no costs for intra-site calls. Given our distributed staff base this was very appealing," Philip says.

*"It arrived on time, fully tested. From an Office Communications Server point of view, it was in and running perfectly with all options available from day one of the project. People took to it really well."*

The deciding factor was when Philip discovered that Microsoft was about to launch its new version of Office Communications Server. "This was going to put Microsoft in the same space as the PABX vendors," he adds. "Sirtex Medical Limited is a Microsoft shop and I saw the solution as essentially as a headset and speaker for utilising our Microsoft software. It meant we could have an Office Communications phone that offered pure integration with our office systems. We wouldn't need another vendor involved."

Aware that a unified communications telephony system might be daunting for some management and staff, Philip decided on telephone handsets that would integrate with the Microsoft Office Communications Server, replicating the function of a standard desk phone. "You can't just take the hand set away and replace it with a soft phone client straightaway. People wouldn't accept it. We could get all these fantastic features by integrating the phone with our computer system but we still had to have a hand set, however as time has moved on, and people have become comfortable with the system, more and more people are requesting headsets " he notes.

### Get professionals to help

To deploy the solution, Philip approached Sirtex Medical Limited's long-term IT partner, Professional Advantage. "We had an existing relationship with Professional Advantage. They'd worked on our Microsoft Dynamics solution, a virtualisation project and some infrastructure projects. I considered one of the principal technicians as a bit of an expert when it comes to Office Communications Server. Given the importance of the system, I didn't want to start from scratch with someone new."

The Microsoft and Professional Advantage project was given the go-ahead by Sirtex Medical Limited's board in June 2010. With the office move due to take place on 1 November, activity soon began. "It was a tight time frame for such a game-changing solution," Philip acknowledges.

To keep the project on track Philip decided to limit the scope of the initial deployment and to focus solely on the Sydney office. International offices could follow on later. "I had an office move to do and many other things to concentrate on, but I knew that if we wanted users to be happy with the new system they had to have the same experience as they would have had with a PABX. Therefore the first order of business for Professional Advantage was to use the software to replicate a phone. We could always meter out additional functionality later."

When time came for the move, the new system was ready and waiting. "It arrived on time, fully tested. From an Office Communications Server point of view, it was in and running perfectly with all options available from day one of the project. People took to it really well," Philip says.

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## Phone calls for free

Now all calls from the Sydney office are funnelled across Sirtex Medical Limited's network. Any calls outside the company attract carrier charges as per normal but any calls to other Sirtex Medical Limited offices or staff are free of charge as they occur on the corporate network. "It's difficult to measure what impact this will have but if I look at our international phone bill, I am estimating it will be cut down to 25 per cent or possibly even less," Philip says.

There are other savings as well. "All up I'd say we've already saved in the order of 75 per cent of what it would have cost to purchase a big brand PABX," Philip notes.

The telephony system allows staff to remain in close contact with the company, wherever they may be. As long as a person has an Internet connection they can connect to their company extension number, check messages or make calls to other staff members at no cost.

## The Future

Although creating a cost-effective, scalable telephony was his primary concern Philip notes, "When you have telephony, you automatically get a ton of other features in Office Communications Server such as video conferencing, messaging and presence."

Philip has earmarked messaging and presence – or the ability to view other staff member availability – as the focus of future training sessions, as both are starting to gain interest among staff, particularly when someone wants to check whether a work mate is online before initiating a call.

Philip sees that video conferencing will also become increasingly important over time. "As a means of attempting to cut costs in travel, I believe we can use video conferencing to achieve around 20 per cent savings. It's going to be important but first we need to give people time to get used to it.

"The main thing is that in addition to practical, feasible dollar value, the solution has not locked us in to long term contracts with yet another vendor. We work with Microsoft and we trust their products. If they come out with a new product it is invariably simple, easy and I know I'm going to understand it," he concludes.

In 2011 Sirtex Medical Limited began deploying the Microsoft unified communications solution internationally, beginning with its Boston, United States office.

For more information

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