



CONTECH STORMWATER SOLUTIONS



CONTECH Stormwater Solutions Uses Visual Communications to Turn Complex Corporate Merger into a Unified Company Ready to Serve Their Clients

Recent research has shown that contaminants carried in stormwater are one of the leading causes of water quality problems. Each raindrop that falls on impervious surfaces, such as pavement, sidewalks, and roads, can mobilize pollutants on those surfaces. Everything from automobile oil and grease to trash and debris can be carried by runoff into our lakes, streams, rivers and oceans. Effective management of these sources of pollutants is the focus of CONTECH Stormwater Solutions.

THE CHALLENGE

In order to achieve their growth and expansion goals, the company had a choice; they could either expand their product offering or merge with another company. After careful consideration of the competitive landscape, Vortechtechnics merged with Stormwater Management, an Oregon-based company, whose complementary products and sales volume were a perfect fit for Vortechtechnics' growth goals. The combined firm, known as Stormwater, was nearly double the size of Vortechtechnics and boasted a product suite that included the most comprehensive line of stormwater treatment and detention technologies in the industry.

After the merger, the two companies had a short window of time to integrate business operations and secure market position. Mike Haskell, IT Manager for Stormwater, noted that the merger forced them to take a careful look at their merger strategy. "We knew we had to work with all of our channel partners the same way, and link the information systems of each company together to share company functions like human resources, inventories, financials and perhaps most importantly, our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. We also needed a shared network infrastructure. But how could we even begin a project like that when our two headquarters were a continent apart?"

BUSINESS ISSUES

Since 1988, Vortechtechnics, Inc. based in Maine, sold stormwater treatment products that helped customers preserve water resources and meet regulatory requirements.

SOLUTIONS

A visual communications solution for Stormwater had two key components: it must integrate with their current Voice over IP infrastructure and communications strategy, and have robust firewall traversal capabilities.

RESULTS

"Once the TANDBERG solution was in place, we saved \$60,000 in travel costs in the first year, and that doesn't even include the value of all the productive time we gained that used to be lost in transit."

FUTURE

Future plans include implementation of the TANDBERG Content Server to record content for use in sales training, to improve product knowledge and accelerate speed to market.



CENTRIC 1700 MXP

Executive control center designed for offices, the 1700 MXP features a superior HD camera and a widescreen LCD. This fully integrated system operates both as a videoconferencing system and PC display, enabling seamless and real-time face-to-face collaboration at the desktop.

TANDBERG PROFILE MAESTRO MXP

For medium to large-sized meeting rooms. Turns existing monitors, projectors and displays into interactive video systems. Built on the TANDBERG 6000 MXP Codec, the Maestro includes the TANDBERG PrecisionHD Camera and CD-quality, stereo audio.

To integrate the people, products, services and systems of both companies effectively, executives in both headquarters needed to be able to conduct meetings on demand, as simply as possible. "The ultimate goal," Haskell says, "was to allow either side to process a customer's order through an entire sales cycle. That meant one CRM system, one accounting and one e-mail system, all using the same network infrastructure. In addition, all personnel had to be trained and up-to-speed on the new company's operations, products and services. To make this happen, we needed to make taking a meeting cross-country as easy as taking a few steps to the conference room." From the beginning, it was obvious that traveling back and forth between offices would not speed up the integration process.

THE SOLUTION

During the evaluation process, Stormwater used these criteria as their primary benchmarks. "TANDBERG showed up with two demo units, and seeing was believing. We started dialing all over the place." TANDBERG's ease of integration with Stormwater's existing IP infrastructure and the flexibility of the Expressway solution for firewall traversal almost immediately solved their communications issues.

For its video pilot program, Stormwater purchased the TANDBERG Expressway solution, made up of a Border Controller, Gatekeeper, as well as two 7000 units. Since there were several enterprises in different locations TANDBERG's Expressway enabled internet video calls between them to help speed the integration work. Later this capability will enable rapid communications with key suppliers as well. "It probably took us longer to get them out of the crates than to get them up and working," Haskell remembers. Within moments of setting up the systems, Stormwater executives held their first ad-hoc call. The experience was so impressive, that Stormwater immediately ordered TANDBERG 8000's and installed them in offices all across the country.

"Once we had the TANDBERG systems in place, communication improved dramatically," says Vaillancourt. "The solution literally allowed us to extend the conference room table across thousands of miles, multiple offices and time zones."



Stormwater promotes the use and mastery of the systems through a “super user” training program. The goal of this program is to help everyone at the company become completely self-sufficient users of these tools. Experts are designated in each department, and they are responsible for conveying technical usage skills, video etiquette and training on how to run an effective meeting. This program has dramatically increased usage of the systems and transformed visual communications from a tool to a utility.

THE RESULTS

An initial evaluation of Stormwater’s visual communications solution showed both tangible and intangible return on investment. The complicated integration of two disparate CRM solutions was conducted in 8 months, at a fraction of the cost. “It would probably have taken us twice as long to bring both companies together if we had to keep flying out there every week,” Haskell remembers. “Once the TANDBERG solution was in place, we saved \$60,000 in travel costs in the first year, and that doesn’t even include the value of all the productive time we gained that used to be lost in transit.”

Haskell also quickly realized that use of the TANDBERG visual communication solution had increased rapidly, far exceeding original expectations. “Originally, we wanted to give senior management a way to meet monthly without traveling across the country,” Haskell notes. “Instead, we are using them an average of 15 times per week. It’s become a vital part of our day-to-day operations.”

Based on the success of this program, Stormwater’s new parent company has begun exploring implementation of visual communication solutions for other divisions across the country. Future plans include implementation of the TANDBERG Content Server to record content for use in sales training, to improve product knowledge and accelerate speed to market.

Stormwater executives firmly believe that their TANDBERG visual communication was a key component of its rapid integration, which has resulted in a strong growth and dominance of the marketplace. “I think TANDBERG has given us an advantage over everyone else in the industry,” Haskell states. “Since TANDBERG helped us merge our operations, we’ve become more agile and responsive. All of our sales people can see what each customer is up to, anywhere in their area or region, and provide support as needed. TANDBERG has really helped us tie things together.”

Contact TANDBERG today to learn how our solutions can support your business processes.

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