BANKING: CONNECTING BRANCHES FOR VoIP WITH EXISTING COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

The Savings Opportunity

As they've grown over the years, banks and financial services firms have set up large numbers of local and regional offices across the country – and often around the world. These multiple locations have typically used the public switched telephone network (PSTN) for their voice communications. At the same time, these offices have been linked to their information systems using IP data network infrastructure. These IP networks are almost always provisioned with more capacity than is necessary to support existing information systems utilization. Banks and financial services firms therefore have a tremendous opportunity to substantially reduce the cost of voice and fax traffic between their various offices by utilizing their existing IP infrastructure, rather than the PSTN.

In addition to eliminating the high cost of their PSTN traffic, banks and other financial institutions can realize significant additional cost savings by using the voice-enabling of their IP networks to consolidate call center operations. Rather than maintaining numerous regional call centers, these companies can receive all their incoming calls at one or more primary call centers. If any of those calls then have to be routed to a branch office, this can be done over the IP network without incurring long-distance charges.

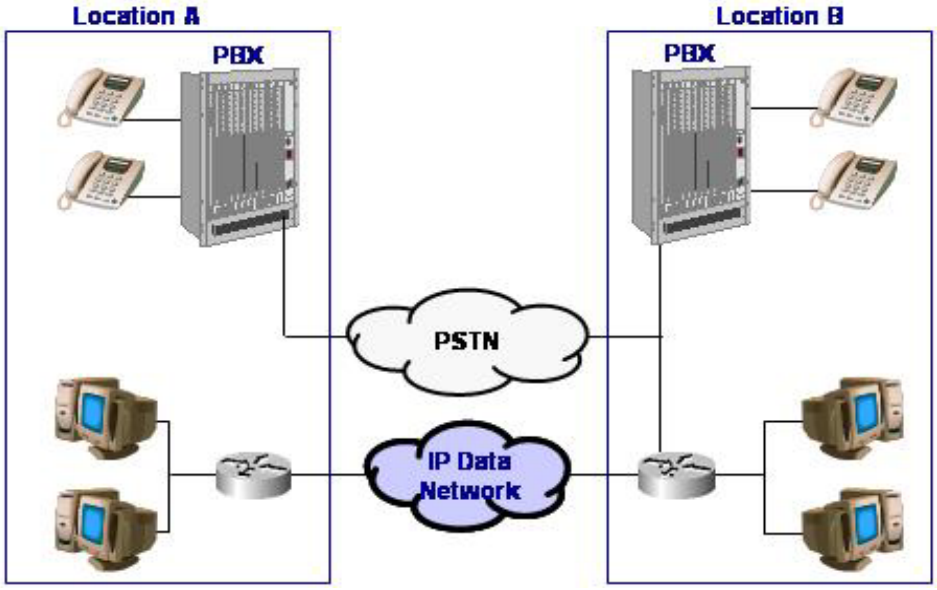
A third potential benefit of network convergence is the reduction of long-distance charges for outbound calls. This cost reduction can be achieved by carrying calls as close to their ultimate destination as possible over the existing IP network, and then "hopping off" to the PSTN for the final leg of the call. This is an especially attractive solution for multi-national organizations seeking to eliminate international toll charges, since it allows the most expensive portion of those calls to be carried over the corporate IP network from country to country.

The Technical Challenge

While the benefits of both "free" inter-office communications and call-center consolidation are both extremely attractive, many financial institutions have been hesitant to deploy voice-over-IP (VoIP) because of two primary concerns: voice quality and disruption of existing infrastructure.

Banks have legitimate concerns regarding their image in the marketplace. Maintaining a perception of stability, security and quality is critical. Since much of their customer contact is by phone, it is critical that voice quality not be jeopardized as a result of a voice-over-IP implementation.

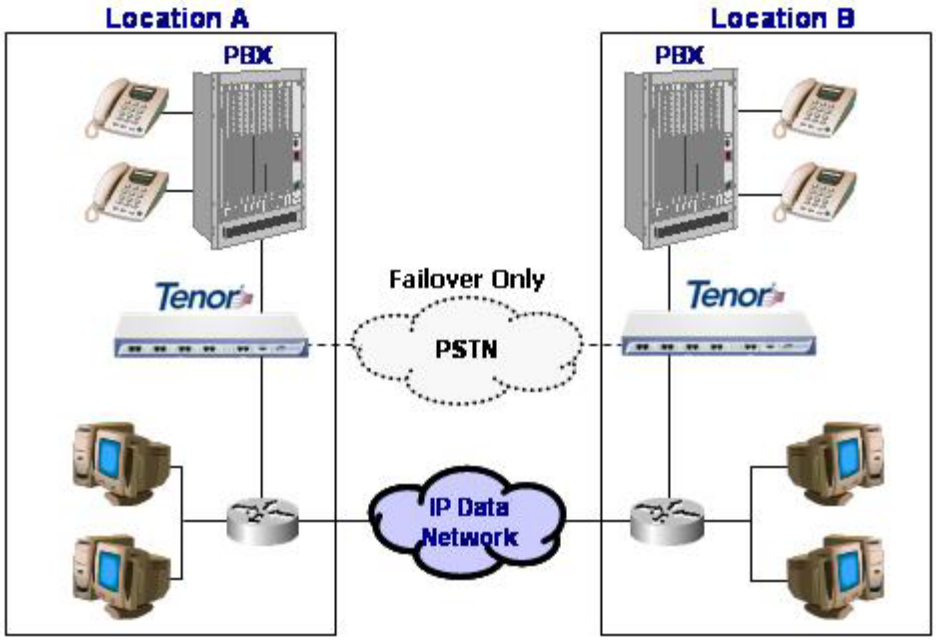
Banks have also made significant investments in their existing communications infrastructure, including IP network devices and PBXs. Any migration to a VoIP solution must therefore avoid disrupting the stability of this infrastructure. In particular, a VoIP solution appropriate to such a situation should not require any upgrade of the existing IP network, reprogramming of the PBX, or additional purchases for any PBX upgrades or interface cards.



Banks typically have separate voice and data networks.

Quintum's Tenor Solution: Non-Disruptive VoIP...The Perfect Fit

Quintum Technologies' patented Tenor switching solution uniquely enables banks and other financial services firms to seize the cost savings opportunities presented by VoIP technology without compromising voice quality or disrupting existing infrastructure.



Quintum's Tenor solution enables banks to use their IP network for both data and voice, with the PSTN always available as an overflow/failover network.

Guaranteed call quality

Tenor switches vigilantly protect voice-call quality by continually monitoring conditions on the IP network and taking immediate action if those conditions threaten voice traffic in any way. If conditions such as delay or "jitter" become evident, Quintum's SelectNet™ technology automatically and transparently switches any active calls from the IP network to the PSTN. This can be done in mid-call without interrupting either party. Once conditions on the IP network are restored, VoIP can then be re-activated. The savings associated with VoIP are thus momentarily sacrificed to ensure non-stop call quality.

Non-disruptive implementation

The Tenor's unique MultiPath architecture allows it to be easily installed in line with existing PBX trunks to the PSTN. This requires little or no reconfiguration of the PBX and eliminates any need to add costly PBX tie trunks. The Tenor's integrated call routing functions identify which calls are to be routed over the IP network. Calls that do not qualify for IP routing simply pass through to the PSTN. The Tenor is thus transparent to the PBX and totally non-disruptive to existing voice and data infrastructure.

Intelligent "hop-off" routing

The Tenor's intelligent, easy-to-administer "hop-off" functionality allows long distance calls outside the bank's network to be first carried to the appropriate local office via the corporate IP network. This functionality is entirely transparent to users. They do not have change their dialing habits and will not notice any difference in voice quality. This significantly reduces toll charges and can actually enable banks to eliminate their tie trunks altogether for even greater savings.

Conclusion

Banks and other financial institutions can potentially realize substantial cost savings by implementing VoIP. However, the risk of reduced voice reliability and/or network disruption has prevented many organizations from taking full advantage of these savings opportunities. Quintum Technologies' Tenor VoIP MultiPath Switch eliminates these risk factors – opening the door for banks to cut inter-office communication costs, consolidate call centers, and avoid long-distance phone charges.