

FaxCore Virtualizes Faxing

By Frank J. Ohlhorst



Many of us have come to think of sending faxes as a

low-tech method of communicating. After all, e-mail, instant messaging and portable document formats have become defacto standards for business communications.

But while the latest high-tech communications methods offer certain advantages over faxing, the fact remains that most communications still find their way onto paper. There is still something to be said for its tangible nature.

FaxCore aims to bring faxing into the 21st century with its integrated fax server. Its primary product, FaxCore 4370, offers a method to integrate faxing into the corporate data network; simply put, FaxCore's product virtualizes faxing.

The advantages to FaxCore's concept are numerous. The technology not only allows users to send and receive faxes from their desktop PC, it also provides them with a way to archive them in order to meet legislative requirements set forth by HIPAA and the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.

FaxCore 4370 tightly integrates with Microsoft Exchange, Internet Information Server and Microsoft's .Net technology. The operating system of choice is Windows Server 2003. That said, end users don't have to be married to those Microsoft technologies. FaxCore provides a Web-based client that works completely within Internet Explorer; no client software is needed. What's more, the product offers direct integration with Microsoft Outlook, allowing a melding of faxing with e-mail features, which is a tremendous convenience for knowledge workers.

Features both expected and unexpected abound in FaxCore 4370. Of course, the

product offers the requisite incoming and outgoing faxing capabilities, but a complete tracking and archiving service also sits on top. Users can be informed every step of the way about the status of a fax, and e-mail confirmations let users know it has arrived at its destination. For incoming faxes, the product supports automatic routing via e-mail or an integrated inbox. Incoming faxes are examined for routing information and delivered to the intended party. To enhance routing, users have the option of embedding a bar code into each fax, which guarantees proper delivery.

Solution providers will find installation a straightforward process, although some initial hardware and software requirements may be considered excessive. For example, the product requires a Windows Server 2003 system set up as an application server. What's more, the company recommends at least a P4 processor and 512 Mbytes of RAM. Along with the prerequisite FaxCore software, a Brooktrout Fax board is required. That board provides the hardware intelligence that enables the software to handle incoming and outgoing faxes via traditional telephone lines.

Beyond tracking and archiving, FaxCore claims that its product saves money by reducing the time spent faxing. For instance, FaxCore claims it can take a person up to six minutes to send a fax manually, while delivering one electronically can reduce the process to as few as 30 seconds.

FaxCore also promises to save additional money by routing faxes during low-cost phone billing times, deferring faxes until the middle of the night, if necessary. When possible, FaxCore will route faxes via IP, eliminating phone charges altogether. All history and data is stored in a SQL database, which helps auditors build custom

reports to track charges and information faxed.

FaxCore proves to be an adept channel player. The company's program strategy is based on a four-tier model. The entry level is a FaxCore Silver Reseller, followed by Gold and Platinum Reseller levels. Those levels are based on reaching certain sales targets and offer variable margins. FaxCore's top tier is FaxCore International Distributor. International Distributors must provide level 1 international support to other resellers and customers.

The company offers annual training at no cost to authorized partners and offers direct support to all partners. A lead-generation program routes leads based on a reseller's territory. Although a reseller is not limited to where it can sell the product, resellers will only receive local leads from FaxCore.

Partners are expected to provide level 1 and level 2 support to their customers, while level 3 support requests are passed to FaxCore's support department. Still, FaxCore will not communicate with a reseller's customer directly without the reseller's explicit permission. The company said it does not sell direct and is completely focused on growing its channel partnerships.

Solution providers will find FaxCore offers a winning combination of technology and channel support. Its product could bring profit and additional services to a reseller's bandolier of offerings.



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