Comdial transforms with integrated Netfinity enterprise solution

Application	Business systems integration with e-business-enabled BI, CRM and ERP solutions
Software	J.D. Edwards OneWorld (ERP) with ActivEra Portal; Siebel Systems Sales Enterprise and eChannel (CRM); Cognos Impromptu and PowerPlay (BI); Microsoft® Windows 2000® and Windows NT®; Microsoft Cluster Service, Exchange Server and Outlook, IIS, SQL Server, Tivoli® Storage Manager
Hardware	IBM Netfinity® 7000 M10, 5500 M20 and 5000 servers; IBM Enterprise Storage Solution
Services	IBM extended warranty services, IBM hardware and software integration services

e-business
™

Integrated communications

Communications technology is changing at the speed of light. And leading the change—particularly where the worlds of computing and telephony meet—is Comdial Corporation, a leader in integrated communications solutions for the fastest-growing business segment: small- to mid-size companies.

Comdial realized that to keep pace with the market, they needed to revamp an aging IT infrastructure. Their solution? The integration of business intelligence

(BI), customer relationship management (CRM), enterprise resource planning (ERP) and e-business systems—all running on a powerful IBM Netfinity server platform.

Revamping IT to stay competitive

Founded in 1977, Comdial creates communications solutions primarily for small- to mid-size businesses as well as vertical market applications and products for hospitality, assisted living,

call centers and real estate industries. They provide everything from digital phone systems to wireless telephony solutions, call center hardware and software, voice processing systems and IP telephony gateways.

As demand for its innovative services skyrocketed in the 1990s, Comdial's internal systems struggled to keep pace. The IT environment, for instance, became a hodge-podge of hardware and software that didn't always work together. "It was hindering business," recalls Jamie Wells, IT director for Comdial. "The legacy systems simply didn't support today's demanding business environment."

Comdial executives decided they needed to improve the way the company did business. They wanted to communicate easily across the various departments within Comdial and with their suppliers and dealers. Additionally, they wanted to create a business channel over the Internet.

Business Systems Integration

To pull together a complete solution, Comdial executives created an internal Business System Integration (BSI) team comprised of key personnel from each of the major corporate departments.

The BSI team launched an in-depth evaluation of various enterprise solutions. After studying the options, J.D. Edwards' OneWorld ERP software was selected. Weaving in leading Siebel Systems CRM applications with the OneWorld package by J.D. Edwards as an integrated, pre-configured solution helped clinch Comdial's decision to go with J.D. Edwards.

Explains Wells, "We chose OneWorld not only because it offers strong enterprise-wide ERP, but J.D. Edwards took it a step further by integrating leading customer relationship management and e-business applications into the solution."

The Siebel Sales Enterprise application allows Comdial to improve communications with its sales force and between its call centers, with easy, real-time access to customer data. "Siebel will allow our employees to tap into the J.D. Edwards data and vice-versa, so that we are able to service the customer more efficiently and effectively," says Wells. Additionally, J.D. Edwards' ActivEra Portal and Siebel's eChannel products will enable Comdial to empower their supply-chain dealer network, with an online catalog, collateral information, proposal assistance and other future e-business enhancements.

In addition, Cognos Business Intelligence applications were selected to complement the enterprise solution. "Cognos gives management quicker access to qualified enterprise data with easy-to-use tools for better business decision making," says Keith Johnstone, vice president of manufacturing for Comdial. "Cognos performs queries in report and graphical form, pulling real-time information directly from the J.D. Edwards system—it will be an important addition to the way we manage and operate our enterprise."

servers for extreme reliability and constant availability of the enterprise data, which will touch every aspect of our organization," adds Wells. "In addition, we needed a cutting-edge and highly manageable centralized storage and tape backup solution that could also scale to support multiple terabytes of information. Only IBM was willing and able to provide the hardware technology and the support we required from a single vendor."

And with Comdial's migration from Microsoft Windows NT to Windows 2000, they wanted a hardware provider with strong ties to Microsoft. IBM more than met this requirement, as both operating systems are tested and certified on the Netfinity server platform. Even the Microsoft Cluster Service configuration that Comdial deployed had been certified to perform through IBM's ClusterProven™ program for Netfinity servers. Furthermore, the J.D. Edwards, Siebel and

Confident Netfinity server solutions

Comdial selected a reliable, scalable Netfinity server clustered configuration to run their new corporate-wide enterprise systems. Coming from a Unisys mainframe and mixed departmental Compaq server environment, Comdial looked at several vendors, including Compaq, Dell, HP and Unisys. "But IBM and Netfinity servers stood out head and shoulders above the others," Wells says.

"We wanted to cluster the Netfinity

"Only IBM was willing and able to provide the hardware technology and the support we required from a single vendor."

Jamie Wells
IT director for Comdial

Cognos applications had all been tested through IBM's Netfinity ServerProven™ program—another key decision factor to choose Netfinity servers.

Big iron capabilities

A mixture of Netfinity rack-mounted servers will run the entire IT operation at Comdial. With 13 Netfinity server clusters running their core enterprise systems including Web hosting and e-business, as well as Microsoft Exchange, Office Suite and file-and-print serving, Comdial has extreme availability and reliability in their Netfinity computing environment. An additional 35 Netfinity servers are planned to run a Windows 2000-based thin client network. This transition of the company's desktop systems will provide an affordable answer to support corporate-wide migration to the new enterprise solution.

Comdial's new enterprise solution will completely revamp the way it does business—with improved communications, enhanced work collaboration, better corporate-wide access to information, more accurate reporting and decision making, direct and supply-chain sales force automation, improved customer relationships and added operational efficiencies.

Concludes Wells, "The industry standard Netfinity servers have been designed to deliver the same 'big iron' capabilities and mission-critical support that we're used to in our mainframe system, but with more system availability and fault tolerance. The IBM, Siebel, J.D. Edwards and Cognos solution is transforming Comdial into a technology-driven company."

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Jamie Wells
IT director
for Comdial

For more information

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