

## Microsoft Office System Customer Solution Case Study



### Alaskan Firm Taps Microsoft Partners to Save \$1 Million with Unified Communications

#### Overview

**Country or Region:** United States

**Industry:** Professional services—  
Architecture, engineering, and related  
services

#### Customer Profile

Alaska-based Alutiiq, LLC, provides a range of professional services from construction and logistics to security, training, and maintenance worldwide. It has more than 6,200 employees.

#### Business Situation

Alutiiq struggled with an outmoded IP-based telephony system that would cost too much to upgrade and lacked unified communications capabilities.

#### Solution

Alutiiq deployed Microsoft® Office Communications Server 2007 R2 and Office Communicator 2007 R2, and it used Microsoft partners Gold Systems—for help with deployment—and Polycom—for voice and video conferencing.

#### Benefits

- Gained dependable, scalable unified communications
- Saved U.S.\$1 million
- Reduced IT time by 85 percent
- Increased productivity
- Provided foundation for the future

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Joe LeNoach, Senior IT Manager, Alutiiq

Alutiiq serves customers worldwide with construction, IT, and other services. By 2008, it needed to upgrade its IP-based telephony system, but its existing vendor was unresponsive and upgrade costs were high. Instead, Alutiiq chose Gold Systems, a Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner, to deploy Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 and Microsoft Office Communicator 2007, and it upgraded to the R2 releases in 2009. Alutiiq also chose several devices that are *Optimized for Microsoft Office Communicator* from Certified Partner Polycom. Now, through Microsoft and its partners, Alutiiq has a unified communications system that integrates with the rest of its Microsoft infrastructure. The company has saved more than U.S.\$1 million in hardware and licensing costs, cut IT time by 85 percent, and significantly boosted productivity.



**“With Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2, the support from Gold Systems, and the Polycom devices that are Optimized for Microsoft Office Communicator, the solution’s value continues to grow.”**

Joe LeNoach, Senior IT Manager, Alutiiq

### Situation

Alutiiq is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Afognak Native Corporation. It provides a range of services including construction, training, security, IT, and logistics and operations for customers worldwide. Headquartered in Anchorage, Alaska, the company generates profits that benefit the indigenous Alutiiq people of Afognak Island in the Kodiak Archipelago of Alaska.

In 2004, to improve communications between its employees in offices throughout the United States, the company deployed a voice over IP (VoIP) system that used multiple IP Private Branch Exchanges (IP PBXs) from Avaya. Over time, however, the company exceeded the network capacity of this system, because each IP PBX could handle only a limited number of connections. Alutiiq did try to interconnect the systems to support more users and also migrated its e-mail servers to Microsoft® Exchange Server 2007. However, the company found that the IP PBXs did not work with some Exchange Server 2007 features, such as Unified Messaging, which provides users with voice mail, faxes, and e-mail in one mailbox. In general, the Alutiiq IT department was spending most of its time just trying to keep the system going.

Alutiiq initially thought about using a system based on technology from its existing VoIP vendor, but the cost was high and the vendor was slow to respond. In addition, according to Joe LeNoach, Senior IT Manager at Alutiiq, “We were tired of all the added expenses and excessive time we were spending with the existing VoIP system. We wanted to continue to build out our infrastructure by using Microsoft

products. So at that point, we decided to go with Microsoft for our unified communications solution.”

### Solution

In April 2008, Alutiiq turned to Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and system integrator Gold Systems. Alutiiq asked Gold Systems to help it devise an architecture for deploying Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007—which delivers software-powered VoIP, conferencing, presence awareness, and enterprise instant messaging (IM)—and integrating it with its existing IT infrastructure. “We had a predeployment interview to see if Gold Systems was a good fit,” says LeNoach. “We determined that it was, and we were impressed by the company’s expertise.”

Gold Systems surveyed the Alutiiq infrastructure and designed an architecture for the solution. Alutiiq and Gold Systems then worked together to deploy Office Communications Server 2007 and Microsoft Office Communicator 2007, which Alutiiq integrated with its Avaya IP PBX and its existing Exchange Server 2007 e-mail system.

In January 2009, the company began to upgrade to Office Communications Server 2007 R2 and Office Communicator 2007 R2. The latest releases provide additional features—including desktop sharing capabilities and group chat—that Alutiiq plans to use in the future. Alutiiq selected the endpoints—the phones and devices—for the solution from Polycom, a Microsoft Certified Partner. LeNoach says, “We knew the Polycom name was practically synonymous with audio clarity. We already had a good relationship with

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Polycom, having used it for our video needs, so the choice was easy.”

Alutiiq chose the Polycom CX200 desktop phone and the Polycom CX700 IP phone that are *Optimized for Microsoft Office Communicator*, along with the Polycom CX100 speakerphone. Nearly all the system users—900 out of 930—work with the Polycom CX200 desktop phone.

Alutiiq maintains several USB CX100 phones in a loan pool, so that even employees who do not regularly travel can take one to use with their portable computers when they are out of the office. That way they benefit from the exceptional audio quality and integration with Office Communications Server 2007 R2.

Alutiiq executives can use the Polycom CX700 IP phones from their home networks, because the phones do not require a PC connection to take advantage of the VoIP functionality provided by Office Communications Server 2007 R2. The Polycom CX700 IP phone can be used several different ways—with a handset, with a headset, or as a full-duplex speakerphone. The phone also has a fingerprint reader for security. “When you swipe your finger across the reader, a certificate is passed and your identity is authenticated, which unlocks the phone. Then it works like any traditional phone—except that the CX700 has exceptional audio quality and a beautiful screen,” says LeNoach.

For group video conferencing, Alutiiq uses the Polycom CX5000 Unified Conference Station device. When teams use the CX5000 with Microsoft Office Live Meeting and Office Communications Server 2007 R2, they can easily collaborate across geographic locations.

The CX5000 provides a unique 360-degree panoramic camera view of the meeting. It also creates a separate active speaker view, which automatically focuses on the current speaker.

With the deployment of Office Communications Server 2007 R2 and the Polycom devices, Alutiiq no longer needed its Avaya IP PBX. Alutiiq completed the upgrade in April 2009 and now 930 people are using the new unified communications system. Alutiiq will deploy the solution to more users over time.

### **Benefits**

Alutiiq is finding new advantages to the solution almost daily. “The deployment decision was a huge one, but it was absolutely the right choice,” says LeNoach. “With Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2, the support from Gold Systems, and the Polycom devices that are Optimized for Microsoft Office Communicator, the solution’s value continues to grow. Alutiiq has gained a dependable unified communications solution that it can add to, and it has saved more than \$1 million.” The solution also requires far less IT time to manage, and overall productivity has improved as well.

### **Gained Dependable, Scalable, Unified Communications**

Unlike the previous system, Office Communications Server 2007 R2 not only easily supports the current users that Alutiiq has in its multiple locations, but it also can be easily extended. “We can now serve everyone, providing dependable, unified communications without resorting to workarounds,” says LeNoach. “Gold Systems helped us to get set up efficiently, and now we can easily add users.”

"Now, there's no question that with Office Communications Server 2007 R2, Gold Systems, and Polycom, we have a solid solution that will pay for itself many times over in the years ahead."

Joe LeNoach, Senior IT Manager, Alutiq

#### **Saved \$1 Million, Expects to Save More**

Compared to an upgrade of its previous system, the choice of Office Communications Server 2007 R2 saved Alutiq more than U.S.\$1 million in hardware and licensing costs. And those savings are just the beginning. With the new solution, employees can use presence awareness to see whether a coworker is available, and they can easily make contact by using either e-mail, IM, phone, or "click to conference" meetings. Presence awareness is available through Microsoft applications such as the Microsoft Office Outlook® messaging and collaboration client or from the Polycom CX700 phone. "Employees like the Polycom phones and the automatic dialing, and the routing automatically uses the most efficient path, so we expect to see significant savings in telephony costs," says LeNoach.

#### **Reduced IT Time by 85 Percent**

Office Communications Server 2007 R2 not only works efficiently, it also simplifies system management. "With the help of Gold Systems in designing the architecture and assisting with deployment, we can now easily manage the solution ourselves. The IT time spent on our communications system has been reduced by 85 percent," says LeNoach. "That means our IT staff can now work on more strategic needs."

#### **Increased Productivity**

The combination of the Microsoft technology and the Polycom devices is leading to increased productivity at Alutiq. Presence awareness has helped employees to communicate, and therefore to work, more effectively. In addition, executives and managers who use the Polycom CX700 phones often take them home to take advantage of

the *Optimized for Microsoft Office Communicator* phone and IP telephony without having to be connected to a PC. "I don't think that people even realize how much more productive they are with Office Communications Server 2007 R2," says LeNoach. "It has transformed our communications. Now it's just part of our corporate culture."

Another component of the solution that is changing the corporate culture is the Polycom CX5000 Unified Conference Station, which employees use in conference room settings. For example, in 2009, Alutiq used the conference station to develop the entire corporate plan through video conferencing, which streamlined the process and increased productivity.

#### **Provided a Foundation for the Future**

Alutiq finds that Gold Systems is a partner it can confidently rely on, now and in the future. "Gold Systems is always there when needed," says LeNoach. "Of course, the system works so smoothly that we don't need to call on Gold Systems representatives that often. But if we need to program in new dialing or audio codes, we know they will be there. They are top-notch."

LeNoach says that Alutiq employees were skeptical about a new solution in the beginning. "They asked us why we would replace the phone system. They brought out the old adage, 'If it's not broken, why fix it?' But they weren't looking at all the costs that were associated with doing it the old way. Now, there's no question that with Office Communications Server 2007 R2, Gold Systems, and Polycom, we have a solid solution that will pay for itself many times over in the years ahead."

## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:

[www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

For more information about Gold Systems products and services, call (303) 447-2774 or visit the Web site at:

[www.goldsys.com](http://www.goldsys.com)

For more information about Polycom products and services, call 1-(800) POLYCOM (765-9266) or visit the Web site at:

[www.polycom.com](http://www.polycom.com)

For more information about Alutiq products and services, call (907) 222-9500 or visit the Web site at:

[www.alutiq.com](http://www.alutiq.com)

## Microsoft Office System

The Microsoft Office system is the business world's chosen environment for information work, providing the programs, servers, and services that help you succeed by transforming information into impact.

For more information about the Microsoft Office system, go to:

[www.microsoft.com/office](http://www.microsoft.com/office)

### Software and Services

- Microsoft Office
  - Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2 Enterprise Edition
  - Microsoft Office Communicator 2007 R2
  - Microsoft Office Live Meeting

### Hardware

- Polycom CX100 speakerphones
- Polycom CX200 desktop phones
- Polycom CX700 IP phones
- Polycom CX5000 Unified Conference Station devices

### Partners

- Gold Systems
- Polycom