

Heinz Integration Challenges Remote Access Providers

Perle's 833IS Beats US Robotics with Increased Speeds and Lower Costs

The Challenge:

Following the merger, an upgrade to a US Robotics NetServer 16 was expected to double remote access connection speeds. Configuration difficulties forced a further upgrade to ISDN and the NetServer 16i, with 56 Kbps modems. But the server kept freezing and the modems were dropping, so that Heinz had to hard reboot 4 or 5 times a day.

The Solution:

On advice from their reseller, Heinz chose a Perle 833IS Access Server, which is aimed specifically at enterprises with 8 to 80 dial-in users.

The Benefits:

The Perle 833IS was installed and running in about 20 minutes. V.90 compliance allowed Heinz to achieve the doubled connection speeds. Improved bandwidth and scalability made for better communication with the Heinz network. The 10/100 auto-sensing Mbps Ethernet port maintained dial-in connections when Heinz USA changed to Gigabit Ethernet backbones. Increased dial-in speeds led to a 20% reduction in phone charges.

THE CUSTOMER:

H.J. Heinz Company is a 10 billion dollar food business. Its 50 affiliates operate in 200 countries and offer over 5,000 varieties.

The company combined Idaho-based Ore-Ida Foods with Pennsylvania-based Weight Watchers Gourmet Food Company. Headquartered in Pittsburgh, the new affiliate is called the Heinz Frozen Food Company.

THE CHALLENGE:

The new company would support about 400 people via a local-area network, as well as around 40 remote users. These users included 20 field sales reps, 15 traveling executives and 10 MIS personnel, who occasionally dialed in from home.

Previously, the remote sales force dialed-in using a Hayes Century II 16 Slot Rack System with 16 28.8 Hayes Modems. The integration budget included new Dell laptops for the sales force and an upgrade to an US Robotics NetServer 16 analog server, which was expected to double remote access connection speeds to 56 Kbps.

Tom Wienand, the company's senior technical support engineer, handled the remote access integration. He had only two weeks to test the new NetServer 16 and modems in Pittsburgh before demonstrating the improved connection speeds at a major sales meeting in Atlanta. After difficulties with configuration, Wienand had to upgrade to ISDN and exchange the NetServer 16 and its 28.8 modems for an ISDN-enabled model, the NetServer 16i, with 56 Kbps modems.

At the sales meeting in Atlanta, the US Robotics demonstration units continually disconnected. But when Wienand got back to Pittsburgh, the real problems began. "The NetServer 16 would lock up four to five times a day," explained Wienand. The server froze, the modems dropped, and we had to hard reboot. Pinging the server and using the management software was fruitless. Even several rounds of emergency code did not do the trick."

THE SOLUTION:

The Perle 833IS Access Server

Wienand spoke to Premiere Technologies, one of his Resellers, who recommended Perle Systems.

Perle had just released the 833IS Access Server, which supports up to 16 high-speed dial-in users. It offers enterprises with 8 to 80 dial-in users an alternative to either low-function fixed-port RAS solutions or high-function, high-priced switch products.

Wienand says, "Installation of the Perle 833IS was just as smooth as butter. It was much simpler than the US Robotics product. I loved the management software: I had absolutely zero problems with it, and it gave real-time statistics as well as a status log. I tested the server, entered all the user information, and had it running in about twenty minutes."

V.90 Compliance

Wienand was also pleased with the V.90 compliance of the new server. V.90 finally allowed him to deliver the doubled connection speeds he had promised the sales staff, which increased their remote productivity tremendously.

Improved Bandwidth & Scalability

The Perle 833IS offered improved bandwidth and scalability, so Heinz Frozen Foods could interact easily with the entire Heinz Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area Network. The Network included Heinz Frozen Foods, H.J. Heinz Service Division, and Heinz USA, which would soon be upgrading to Gigabit Ethernet backbones. This upgrade would provide 100 Mbps connections to the desktop. The auto-sensing 10/100 Mbps Ethernet port on the Perle 833IS would integrate seamlessly into this new network environment, maintaining the dial-in connections between Heinz Frozen Foods and its affiliates.

Substantial Savings

The increased dial-in speeds saved Heinz Frozen Foods money. They reduced 800 number charges by almost 20% (from \$8,000 US to \$6,500 US per month). The Perle 833IS paid for itself in three months. Extremely pleased with the Perle 833IS, Wienand plans to continue his excellent relationship with Perle Systems as Heinz Frozen Foods' remote access needs continue to evolve.

Footnote:

Please note that since the Heinz installation, Perle has introduced Cisco IOS™ configuration to the Perle 833IS Access Server.