

Quick, Easy Access to Multiple Resources

Perle's 833 Increases Productivity of Mobile Caregivers

The Challenge:

MTHH employs field-based caregivers, who require fast, easy access to important information and to colleagues throughout the agency's network. The organization needed to provide remote users with seamless access to its AS/400, Novell and NT server resources.

The Solution:

After looking at servers from 3Com and IBM, MTHH chose Perle's 833 Access Server. The Perle 833 outperformed the competition and offered by far the best value.

The Benefits:

The agency's care providers now have both patient records and E-mail at their fingertips and can communicate freely with other agency staff members. This added administrative efficiency has left caregivers with more time for their patients.

THE CUSTOMER:

Middle Tennessee Home Health is a non-profit agency with 210 employees. In addition to the main office in Winchester, MTHH has eight satellite offices, servicing 34 counties in and around the state of Tennessee. MTHH has been in business for 23 years and is the state's first licensed home health agency.

THE CHALLENGE:

Caregivers on the Move

MTHH employs a staff of caregivers, who conduct administrative work out of satellite offices and perform healthcare tasks at the homes of their patients. These field-based caregivers frequently require fast and easy access to information such as patient records and also need to communicate spontaneously with other caregivers in the MTHH network. During the first stages of network development, MTHH caregivers were only able to access information stored on the central AS/400. IS Director Glen McClure explains, "A caregiver out in the field might want to check on a patient's record prior to a visit to become familiar with past care, or require directions to the patient's home on a first visit. All of this information resided on the AS/400 and it was quickly apparent that providing the remote offices with access to this information would make them immediately more productive."

3-Way Access

It was also clear that providing access to the AS/400 was only a part of MTHH's communications problem. If a caregiver wanted to communicate patient information, or place a query with a colleague on the network, it was still done by fax, phone and "snail" mail. McClure wanted each caregiver to have E-mail access, just like central office staff, who used a mail system on the Novell network. The simplest solution would be to provide remote caregivers with access to information on the Novell server in addition to the AS/400. However, he was also starting to migrate AS/400 data to the NT server. "I required a remote device that would allow access to the AS/400, the Novell Server or the NT server seamlessly," concluded McClure.

THE SOLUTION:

The Perle 833 Access Server

McClure explains, "Perle was referred to me because of the server's ability to operate effectively in an AS/400 environment, as well as being able to communicate with Novell and NT."

Seamless Network Access

McClure decided to purchase an 8-port Perle 833 and place it at the center of the network. The Perle 833 provides the link that allows remote users to access information seamlessly from the AS/400, Novell and NT servers.

Valuable Features

"We evaluated other products such as 3Com and the IBM server, but they were not as well equipped to support the AS/400 access requirements of our network. In addition, the Perle 833 was by far the best value on the market. The Perle 833 had all of the features of 3Com and IBM and it was a better price. This, coupled with its ease of use and performance, solidified our decision to purchase the Perle 833," said McClure.

Quality Of Care

"Our care providers can immediately access E-mails, as well as the patient records they used to access in the past. They can exchange information between branches immediately freeing them of the mundane faxing, mailing, or arranging for couriers, that used to be the only communication resource available to them. Certainly this allows our providers more time to spend with the patients doing their jobs and less time performing mundane administrative tasks," explains McClure.

Future Developments

In the future, MTHH plans to evolve to a Wide Area Network. The agency also plans to provide some caregivers with portable computers, enabling them to communicate directly from home or from a patient's home. MTHH plans to capitalize on the Perle 833 as it continues its migration process from the AS/400 to Windows®NT.

Case Study