



Hutchison Essar Telecom

A Connection to Smoother Call Center Operations

Begun in 1995, Hutchison Essar was the first mobile service operator in India. The company is currently an industry leader, with more than 3.5 million subscribers spread throughout the country. Hutchison is part of the Hong Kong-based multinational conglomerate Hutchison Whampoa Limited, a *Fortune* 500 company and one of the largest companies listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

THE CHALLENGE: DEPLOYING CRITICAL APPLICATIONS IN A LOW-BANDWIDTH ENVIRONMENT

Hutchison operates in a 24x7 mode, taking customer calls around-the-clock. While call center agents (CSAs) attend to customers, they simultaneously reference customer data on their PCs. These data are extracted from two applications — a customer care application developed by Servion, and BSCS packaged billing solution hosted and managed centrally from Hutchison's data center in Delhi.

In 2001, as the number of mobile subscribers using the company's network grew significantly, Hutchison's call center in Delhi faced an increasing pressure to service a much greater number of customer calls. To handle the increased call load and to improve the average response time in attending a call, Hutchison decided to increase the number of CSAs at its call center to 200. However, the company was concerned about the high costs of providing PCs for these additional CSAs.

At the same time, Hutchison was struggling with constraints posed by poor connectivity in areas surrounding Delhi, in the North region. Hutchison outsources handling of customer calls in these areas to third-party call centers, and the company also has an extensive network of dealers spread across the region.

While the outsourced call centers had dial-up access to the customer care and billing applications hosted in Hutchison's data center in Delhi, the poor speed of dial-up Internet connections was problematic, and Hutchison was under pressure to buy expensive leased lines to keep the centers connected to its servers.

Hutchison's dealers, on the other hand, had no connection to the company's data, and were forced to periodically call Hutchison to ask about the status of new customer connections. This setup ate into their time to attend to the customers entering their shops. Hutchison wanted to extend connectivity to its

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ARVIND PANDEY

Vice President – Information Services,
Hutchison Essar Telecom Ltd

Key Benefits

- Cost savings of more than \$100,000 in client hardware, and more than \$200,000 annually on bandwidth
- Automatic failover and load-balancing enable reliable access
- Faster call center response times for better service and higher productivity
- Faster and easier activation of new customer accounts

Applications Deployed

- BSCS billing software from SchlumbergerSema
- Customer care solution developed by Servion
- Connection authorization application for dealers

data center to its dealers via a customized authorization application, so that they would be able to immediately activate new customer accounts via computer.

To solve these problems, the company was faced with the dilemma of spending more than its budget allowed. However, the alternative — operating in a low-bandwidth, dial-up environment — posed the risk of unreliable, delayed customer response and late customer account activation. In the increasingly competitive telecommunications arena in India, this scenario could prompt existing subscribers to switch to other mobile service operators — an unacceptable situation. Hutchison sought a solution that could meet its challenges cost-effectively and, at the same time, keep its business-critical applications up and running without interruption.

A CITRIX SOLUTION FOR APPLICATION DEPLOYMENT

After careful evaluation and comparison with another product, Hutchison chose to deploy its customer care, billing and connection authorization applications using Citrix® MetaFrame® Presentation Server. Explained Arvind Pandey, Vice President – Information Services, “Our key criteria were automatic failover, redundancy and load-sharing, in all of which Citrix scored much higher than the competition.” To minimize the costs of hardware upgrades at its Delhi call center, the company also decided to replace its desktop PCs with thin clients, which are supported in a Citrix environment.

Hutchison engaged the services division of **Hewlett-Packard India** to implement MetaFrame Presentation Server across Hutchison’s own call center, the outsourced call centers and the dealer network. The implementation process, according to Pandey, was quite smooth and took only six weeks.

Using MetaFrame Presentation Server, Hutchison is now able to provide faster access to customer care, billing and connection authorization applications to the outsourced call centers and the dealers in the entire North region using dial-up connectivity. This has been made possible because Citrix’s centralized access architecture keeps all application processing on Hutchison’s servers at its data center in Delhi, while only minimal data — screen refreshes, mouse clicks and keystrokes — travel across the network between server and client. Therefore, application performance is high, even over low-bandwidth connections. Moreover, these applications are now available with no downtime.

ACHIEVING SIGNIFICANT COST SAVINGS

MetaFrame Presentation Server has helped Hutchison meet its challenges of deploying applications very cost-effectively. The company previously incurred high expenses on connectivity to outsourced call centers and the dealer network; with its Citrix solution, Hutchison’s savings on bandwidth costs have amounted to \$217,391 per annum. The company also realized immediate cost savings of \$108,695 by purchasing thin clients instead of adding and upgrading its PCs.

Besides cost savings, Hutchison has enjoyed qualitative benefits that directly translate into improved customer service and added value for its dealer and call-center network. For instance, load-balancing and automatic failover components of MetaFrame Presentation Server ensure that no single server is clogged due to heavy workload, and that functions are automatically distributed amongst the remaining systems in the event that a network server goes down. In short, MetaFrame Presentation Server ensures that heavy server loads or failures do not result in interruption of service to the customers. “With the use of Citrix MetaFrame Presentation Server, we are able

Networking Environment

- Citrix® MetaFrame® Presentation Server running on six dual-CPU systems from Hewlett-Packard
- Microsoft® Windows® 2000 Server
- 64Kbps and 128Kbps dial-up links to call centers and dealers
- 200 HP thin clients

to do load-balancing, automatic failover and many other management tasks critical to the smooth running of our operations,” said Pandey.

Moreover, customer data now loads much faster onto the screens of CSAs, and they are able to attend to the customers more promptly as a result. Improved response times mean each CSA is able to take a greater number of customer calls than before, making the call centers much more efficient. For dealers, activating new customer accounts has become faster, since the application authorizing new connections is now available right on their computers. Concluded Pandey, “The Citrix solution has proved an excellent return on investment for us — both qualitatively and quantitatively.”

About Citrix MetaFrame Access Suite: Extending the world’s most widely deployed presentation server, the Citrix MetaFrame Access Suite is access infrastructure for the on-demand enterprise. The suite centralizes access to applications and information and enables IT staffs to deliver, manage, monitor and measure enterprise resources on demand.