

Computer TELEPHONY

The Magazine for Computer and Telephone Integration

Best of Show at CTExpo

Best of CT EXPO 98

With over 600 vendors to choose from, there were a ton of interesting new product launches and upgrades to be found in the Los Angeles Convention Center. These are just some of the things that stood out as we walked The Show floor. Important note: Time and space constraints didn't allow us to get everything in here that caught our collective eye. But have no fear: Next month we'll continue our coverage.

by the editors

ADVANCED QUEUEING SYSTEMS' SMART VIRTUAL PBX SERVICE

I gave Advanced Queueing Systems (San Francisco, CA — 888-825-0800) a lot of ink last month (see the March issue, page 82) in my profile of the so-called "virtual office." To recap fast, AQS is providing a very robust network-based phone system. You rent its power instead of going out and paying a large sum of money for your own system. Very cool.

But as I visited with them at The Show in **Phonezone.com's** cluttered booth, I discovered another excellent use for this type of service-based technology — not just as a replacement for PBXs, but as a failsafe backup.

Why not? Everybody backs up their computers periodically, right? Most companies buy uninterruptible power supplies to protect their electronic gear. Yet hardly anybody backs up their phone system.

Advanced Queueing Systems announced a breakthrough service which provides companies with a turnkey disaster recovery service that lets them continue receiving calls even if their entire facility is destroyed in a disaster, fire, etc.

AQS' new PBX Parachute service creates a mirror image of a company's telephone system, with the same extension number plan, and same features (i.e. voicemail, auto attendant, ACD). The mirrored system is a service which answers on an 800/888 number, so no on-site equipment is required.

Calls are re-routed to individual users at their home phones, cell phones, backup office locations, wherever they want to take calls. Customers calling in hear the same greeting and dial the same extension numbers as they would with the company's primary system so the cu-

tover to the backup service is transparent to customers.

Here's an excellent example of how this service could be used.

ABC Textiles has 100 employees, most of whom work in sales or general administration. They spend most of their day on the phone. One weekend, an arsonist torches the company headquarters, destroying most of the building.

Normally, the company would be out of operation. With the PBX Parachute service, the company could forward their voice and fax lines to AQS. Customers would be able to communicate with company employees just as they would normally, only the calls would be forwarded to employees at home or wherever they could conveniently work from. The backup service can be activated as quickly as the user can have their main number(s) forwarded to AQS.

Advanced Queueing Systems charges a nominal fee to set up an emergency phone system which is pre-loaded with the user's employee directory, extension tables and custom audio greetings. They also charge for usage at rates ranging from 16 to about 30 cents per minute depending on the location of the company and of the employees to whom calls are being routed.

Meantime, I'm still recommending their Crosspoint VirtualPBX. Great for start up companies with employees at multiple locations or no dedicated office. Crosspoint VirtualPBX provides a full suite of PBX features such as voice/fax mail, follow-me roaming, music on hold, ACD — again, all without requiring the customer to invest in customer premise equipment.

Zippy Grigonis

