

# CASE STUDY

## PIPER ALDERMAN

Data#3

**Technology:**  
Microsoft Lync

## Unified Communications Rollout

### Background:

Piper Alderman is a full-service, commercial law firm with offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide. It has 53 partners, more than 165 lawyers and 350 staff in total.

Piper Alderman is consistently ranked as one of Australia's leading law firms and is independently recognised as an outstanding legal provider. The firm brings together a national team whose approach is commercial and outcome driven, drawing on proven expertise to add real value to every client's business.

The firm is committed to continual excellence in the practice of law, having been leading advisers to commercial interests across Australia for over 160 years.

### The Challenge:

Piper Alderman was operating with an unsupported Nortel PABX whose poor performance was causing issues such as call dropouts and compromising the service Piper Alderman offers its clients.

Additionally, age and instability of the PABX meant that many common administrative tasks – such as moves,

adds and changes – could not be performed internally, but instead had to be provided under a third party support agreement. Timeliness and cost were both issues for these administrative tasks.

Piper Alderman was looking to provide a more immersive voice and video experience for remote workers and telecommuters. Supported by Data#3, Piper Alderman undertook an evaluation of various solutions in the marketplace, including Cisco's Call Manger and Microsoft Lync. Given that staff had already embraced the benefits of Microsoft Office Communicator 2007 for presence management, instant messaging, click-to-dial and other unified messaging functions, it was logical that an upgrade to Lync would enhance the user experience and provide further productivity gains.

### The Solution:

Piper Alderman had existing Microsoft enterprise licensing, which strengthened the business case for a firm-wide rollout of Microsoft Lync. Piper Alderman engaged with Data#3 to help perform a full technical evaluation to ensure that the transition to Lync would provide the robust and resilient unified communications solution required to support email, instant messaging, presence management and voice and video communication services.

Data#3 was selected based on industry reputation, local (Adelaide) presence

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“While Office Communicator was bolted on to the old PABX, Lync feels like just a part of the application stack, not an add-on. Its integration with Outlook web access really means that people can be anywhere but still use instant messaging, presence management etc., in exactly the same way.”

**Scott Baxter, IT Director,  
Piper Alderman**

and track record. Conversation with a local government reference site provided further validation that the solution was user-friendly and that Data#3 would be a strong partner for the transition.

The Lync voice infrastructure conversion was installed in two phases:

- The Adelaide office had a Media Gateway installed to provide coexistence and migration between Lync voice services and the existing Nortel PBX. Exchange 2010 and Lync 2010 were installed and configured to coexist with the existing Exchange 2007 and Office Communication Server 2007 installation. Migration of mailboxes and messenger clients was phased, with a progressive transition to Lync voice services. Rollback was available by leaving the current Nortel systems in place, and these will be decommissioned once all users have been migrated.
- Once the Adelaide office was fully moved to Lync Enterprise Voice, Survivable Branch Appliances (SBAs) were placed at all branch offices to replace the Nortel equipment and provide branch office resilience in the event of a WAN outage to the Adelaide office. Rollback was available by leaving the current Nortel systems in place and these will be decommissioned once all users have been migrated.

The phased user migration was planned with an initial pilot program involving office managers and key personnel (a group of about 15-20 people) to prove the non-disruptive rollout strategy. This also meant that there was a pool of experienced users who could help others master the new environment when help was required.

**“The upgrade has really facilitated behavioural change and engagement within the firm, improving internal communications and fostering a real culture of shared knowledge.”**

Scott Baxter, IT Director, Piper Alderman

### The Outcome:

The outcome has been extremely successful, with a range of business benefits including:

- Reduced communications outages which compromise service delivery to clients
- Extended capture of conversations and case history for auditing and billing
- IT department freed up from keeping the older PABX and systems going, meaning they have more time for strategic business projects

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- Reduced travel costs, with video conferencing replacing some former travel and support for a richer conferencing experience with shared desktops etc.
- Enhanced communications within geographically separate teams
- Improved control for users, who can now program their own call groups, overflow call diversion and so on.

The phased rollout allowed a focus on user training, providing training on more than just key features, helping the user base to understand and benefit from a full range of productivity features. Even so, Scott Baxter, IT Director at Piper Alderman, was impressed at how users 'just got on and used it', which is testament to the ease-of-use. "We have users extending their use of the headsets that provide mobility into other areas like dictation," he says, "and the ability to use the solution on a range of devices including smartphones really makes it universally accessible."

"The whole system is really stable and secure," he says, "and has substantially reduced our support burden. The number of projects we have on the go now to support the business really shows the time that we've got back from maintaining the old system. I estimate that our support load for unified communications has reduced by approximately 50%."

**"We are seeing continued uptake of features like videoconferencing. Continued requests for cameras let us see the spread of videoconferencing use across the organisation."**

Scott Baxter, IT Director, Piper Alderman