

## Cisco Partner Helps Construction Firm Push **Technology** Envelope

### Executive Summary

#### Background

Barton Malow Co. is a top-ranked construction and construction management firm. The company's new state-of-the-art headquarters was to utilize the best new technology to improve company communications and provide infrastructure to serve the company into the future.

#### Issue

Company executives had a "one company" vision where everybody, no matter where they are geographically located, is just a phone extension away. The job sites, located all over the nation, are dependent upon the facility owner, architect, and sub-contractor community. Company executives wanted Internet-enabled project management tools to improve communications and make the company more competitive.

#### Solution

Cisco Premier Partner Netarx recommended an IP telephony system using converged Cisco AVVID architecture that would reduce Barton Malow's ongoing cost of ownership and deliver the competitive advantages and benefits the company wanted. Netarx's proactive Network Monitoring System, Remote Network Operations and Secure CANI address any concerns about corporate security and administrative support for the new IP system.

#### Results

Barton Malow has a converged, voice, video, and data infrastructure that saves the company thousands of dollars each month and will serve it well into the future. The availability of information via the Cisco system, particularly at the different job sites, gives Barton Malow a competitive advantage and the "one company" structure the executives envisioned.

The Barton Malow Co., of Southfield, Michigan, is an award-winning design and construction firm that is consistently ranked among the top 50 builders in the nation. Never content with the status quo, the company strives constantly to implement the best technology available to facilitate business and boost its bottom line. The company was moving into a new state-of-the-art headquarters that it designed to showcase the company's vision and competencies. Included in that vision was utilizing the best technology to improve corporate communications today as well as providing the infrastructure to serve the company well into the future. Barton Malow teamed with Cisco Premier Partner Netarx, Inc. to implement state-of-the-art IP telephony that saves the company thousands of dollars each month while fulfilling the "one-company" vision that was the goal of Barton Malow executives.

### An Agile Construction Firm Resists Complacency

The construction industry is historically resistant to change, with a labor intensive, paper-heavy 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' mentality. Barton Malow CIO Phil Go takes a different tack, insisting that there must always be a better, more efficient way to do things.

"As an industry, construction is at least 10 years behind the times," said Go. "Not many construction companies are interested in leveraging the Internet to be productive and successful. We felt it would give Barton Malow a competitive advantage in availability of information—especially at our job sites—enabling us to make decisions quickly. In construction, we are dependent upon the facility owner, architect, and the sub-contractor community. What better way to collaborate than by using internet-enabled project management tools?"

Cisco partner Netarx, Inc., out of Bingham Farms, MI, was eyeing Barton Malow as a client. "Barton Malow meets the profile of the type of customer we like to work with," said Duane Tursi, president of Netarx. "They were a very qualified prospect looking to new technology for a WAN solution. We knew they'd have a new headquarters and a big project down the road so we tracked them, met with them and knew that we were a perfect fit for their needs." The Netarx mission is clear: Proactive customer service and the highest degree of customer satisfaction. Netarx practices a convergence philosophy of



planning, design, implementation and operation of corporate communication networks. Barton Malow was committed to Cisco products for the system infrastructure, but the IP Telephony was up for bid. After many competitive meetings, Barton Malow selected Netarx over twenty-five other bidders.

“Choosing a converged IP telephony infrastructure was viewed as a strategic decision for Barton Malow,” said Go. “The capabilities Netarx brings to the table would enable us to reduce our ongoing cost of ownership and realize the competitive advantages and benefits associated with IP telephony. I felt strongly that Netarx would stay with us through the entire program and that the firm was committed to my success.”

### **Cisco Partner Provides Valuable Remote Network Operations Support and Services**

Duane Tursi likes to say that Netarx ‘lives and dies with Cisco’ since many of its competitive capabilities are specifically built around and enhanced for Cisco’s technology. As a Cisco certified Premier Partner with several Cisco IP Specializations under its belt, Netarx evangelizes a convergence philosophy with Cisco’s AVVID architecture. Additionally, the Netarx Remote Network Operations (RNO) support (often called “day 2”) capabilities are a strategic differentiator between it and its integration competitors.

“While it’s widely accepted that IP will be the universal transport in the near future, many companies are hesitant to adopt IP Telephony because of concerns about corporate security and lack of administrative operations support options,” said Tursi. “Netarx has addressed these concerns head-on with our proactive Network Monitoring System, Remote Network Operations and SecureCANI.”

After finishing the implementation of a project, Netarx RNO support is the physical manifestation of project completion and cutover. Furthermore, over time the project success criteria are continually reviewed and prove the investment justification. The Netarx Network Operations Center operates 24/7, its hardware monitoring all parts of a customer’s network and documenting and notifying Netarx if something is failing.

It also generates reports on trend analysis and capacity planning making it a valuable tool for company executives and managers, not just the IT department. A proactive mechanism is in place in the event a system threshold is exceeded, Netarx engineers get a ‘heads up’ and address it before it ever becomes an issue.

Go is a huge advocate of the Netarx RNO support. “We couldn’t have asked for anything better,” he notes. “We don’t have the resources or the IP Telephony skill set in-house to manage the system to the extent Netarx does. The Netarx RNO support is very transparent—really an extension of our IT staff. With Netarx’s RNO capabilities, we are reducing our ongoing cost of ownership and are realizing the competitive advantages and benefits associated with IP telephony.”

With its SecureCANI service, Netarx performs security assessments, scans, analyses and penetration testing, then recommends a strategy for policy-based CERT standards for its clients’ corporate Cisco AVVID Network Infrastructure (CANI).



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— Phil Go, CIO of Barton Malow

### **Careful Planning Makes for Smooth Implementation.**

The implementation itself went smoothly which Go credits to Netarx and Barton Malow doing their homework very well.

“The planning and designing of a system like this is critical,” he said. “We knew there’d be bumps in the road but Netarx really did its homework down to every detail and it was rock-solid from the beginning. The partnership between the two companies is built on trust, so when issues did come up there was no finger-pointing.”

Tursi agrees. “The wrap-up post-mortem meeting on the Barton Malow implementation was one of the biggest pleasures of the whole project!” he reports. “It really showed how important planning is to these projects—having the foresight and really understanding the expectations of the client. We had Barton Malow’s trust so they let us do what we had to do to get it done. It’s a huge trust factor and the companies have a real partnership.”

### **Barton Malow Succeeds With ‘One-Company’ Vision**

The Barton Malow mindset is that ‘work is an activity, not a place.’ The infrastructure is in place for all 1,550 employees to have 5-digit dialing access, no matter the job site or region they’re at. This was critical to Barton Malow executives who envisioned a ‘one-company’ structure where everybody works together and is just an extension away. The improved communication within the company has resulted in faster, more effective decision-making, and the ability to resolve issues in 2 or 3 days what used to take weeks. Go reports a 66 percent reduction in the time required to resolve construction issues on various projects. There is also significant savings in monthly expenditures for phone services and travel to meetings.

“We’re saving between \$500 and \$1,000 per month in telephony charges between offices,” said Go. “And by implementing video conferencing we have saved \$100,000 in four months on travel costs and lost productivity time. It’s wonderful to meet ‘face-to-face’ with our colleagues without wasting hours sitting on a plane or in an airport.

In the end, Netarx, Inc. and Barton Malow remain close business partners. "My gut instinct to go with Netarx was the right one," said Go. "A year later Netarx is still here with us and we have built with them a true hand-in-hand partnership. The Netarx people are committed to our success, and we are proud of what they've accomplished here and are committed to their success as well."

So while many in the construction industry are still depending on the 'old way' of doing things, Go is pleased that with its new IP system in place, Barton Malow has a converged voice, video and data infrastructure that will serve it well into the future. In an industry that lives by 'if it ain't broken, don't fix it' Barton Malow has indeed found a better way to do business.



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