

CRI revolutionizes the UC experience **By developing the 1st UC Single Server Solution- CRI *IS* UC**

by Ray Horak, Technology Editor

Communications Resources Inc. (CRI) boasts a long history as a messaging systems integrator, having become an Octel VAR in 1990. For the past 19 years they have supported Octel messaging systems and in 1997 deployed the very first Avaya Unified Messaging solution. As Octel later merged into Lucent, which subsequently spun off the end user PBX and messaging business as Avaya, CRI has maintained the pedigreed relationship and is now an Avaya Gold Level DevConnect Member. CRI also is a Microsoft Solution Provider, IBM Business Partner, VMware Partner and Dell OEM Partner.

CRI has leveraged the special skills acquired to maintain those credentials and developed a unique single-server solution for Unified Communications (UC). In a recent interview with Telecom Reseller, Scott McKechnie, CRI's Director of Unified Communications, explained that CRI recognized a huge opportunity in the industry for virtualization coupled with the introduction of Avaya's Unified Communication All Inclusive promotion. Any customer upgrading to Communication Manager 5.0 Enterprise Edition IP Telephony software automatically receives all desktop and mobility applications, including Applications Enablement Server (AES) integration with Microsoft Office Communicator or IBM Lotus Sametime, one-X Portal, oneX-Mobile and Intelligent Presence. Customers purchasing the CM 5.0 Standard Edition can get the same features at a bargain price of \$50 per seat. "Avaya customers really took notice of the promotion and we at CRI saw a huge increase in the number of customers interested in small trials. Unfortunately, the Communication Manager UC platform does not lend itself to a casual trial scenario. Rather, it requires a real active engagement from the customer in the form of some LDAP engineering, security and certificate management, interfacing with a Microsoft OCS or IBM Sametime server. A full trial can involve as many as 9 or 10 servers. We at CRI were able to utilize the special skill sets we developed through our relationships with Avaya, Microsoft, IBM and VMware to develop a virtualized Integrated Server (IS) solution as well as two other elements, the All Inclusive Implementation and All Inclusive Support offers and we have dubbed these 3 components, the CRI UCSplash, making it easy for folks to dip their feet in the UC waters"

The UCSplash *I*ntegrated *S*erver is a single server solution that really simplifies an Avaya Communication Manager 5.0 proof-of-concept (POC) trial. CRI stages the trial on its premises, loading all applications on multiple virtual servers that share a single Dell PowerEdge rack-mounted 1U physical server. That approach eliminates a lot of servers and consequently a lot of deployment issues. CRI literally can build the platform in one day and ship it to the customer overnight. The customer can rack it and stack it, plug it in, fired it up and have the Avaya UC applications running in less than a day as compared to several days if not weeks in production mode. UCSplash was designed to support 50 users, this is a quick Splash, after all, and not a fully immersion, the full immersion is

already in development! The customer also gets 20 hours of technical support which they can use for OCS or Sametime integration, training, desktop client assistance, mobile client support or any other purpose related to the POC trial. At the end of the trial the customer can extend their usage for an additional fee. Although Avaya currently does not deliver the UC suite of applications on virtual machines, CRI anticipates a full production opportunity for UCSplash sometime in the very near future along with other parts of the Avaya portfolio.

CRI is a channel-oriented systems integrator. Once the consulting relationship is struck, CRI works directly with the end user organization, keeping the channel partner in the loop, so to speak. CRI is one to watch as they pride themselves on their “living lab”, they live and breath this technology on a daily basis and are always coming up with new solutions. **CRI IS** the Unified Communications Partner of Choice.

For more visit www.crinj.com