Need
TO KNOW
VoIP & UC

WHO ARE THE UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS AND VOIP VENDORS
THE CHANNEL REALLY NEEDS TO KNOW? There are as many in-
terpretations of that question as there are logical answers, beginning with:
"What does it mean to be a UC vendor?" Well, for starters, it means that
coming up with a list of 25 established vendors and 10 emerging vendors
is hardly an easy task. No, this isn't the end-all, be-all guide to UC and VoIP players in the chan-
nel—that list would dwarf this one—nor is it intended to be a cataloguing of all the relevant
networking, infrastructure and data center players that solution providers with UC practices may
want to check out. Rather, we took a look at the vendor field through a number of different
lenses. There are vendors, for example, with long-established UC practices and a wide range of
UC and IP-PBX networking products that solution providers can sell profitably, and that have
comprehensive indirect channel programs. Then there are vendors that specialize in particular
areas that are in UC or directly relevant to UC—Polycom, for example, as a conferencing and
collaboration vendor with deep integrated ties to vendors with broader UC portfolios—or that are
strong in at least one or more areas under the UC umbrella. You'll notice that we have focused
our attention more on those vendors with on-premise offerings and those that are from the more
traditional IP-PBX and VoIP equipment worlds, with the full understanding that the lines between
what constitutes an IT networking vendor in the UC/VoIP arena and what constitutes a UC/VoIP
service provider are blurrier than ever.

—Chad Berndtson

RHUB has been recognized as an Emerging Need To Know Vendor by CRN

RHUB positions its TurboMeeting as an all-in-one Web conferencing tool for SMBs:
a rival to the WebExes and GoToMeetings of the world that packs everything from
chat and file transfer to display adjustment.

RHUB Looks To Drive Channel Revenue With Hosted Conferencing

By Chad Berndtson, CRN
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Count RHUB Communications among an emerging class of vendors that sees a less costly, less cumbersome, less IT-intensive form of Web conferencing creating new revenue opportunities for willing channel partners.

The company's TurboMeeting appliances have gained good notices and budding interest in the channel, especially as an alternative to other conferencing platforms like Cisco (NSDQ:CSCO) WebEx, Citrix (NSDQ:CTXS) GoToMeeting and Microsoft Office Live Meeting. Chief among RHUB's accolades? Ease-of-use, and intuitive management -- comfortably operable appliances and a web conferencing experience for users that doesn't require additional software.

The San Jose-based company was founded in 2005 by CEO Larry Dorie and CTO John Mao. Mao had begun product development on what became the Linux-based RHUB appliance two years earlier, looking for a way to overcome firewall traversal issues with Web conferencing systems. The company is privately owned and to date, has taken no outside funding.

What emerged for the RHUB appliances, two years into the company's debut, is RHUB's concept of "4-in-1" -- that is, an appliance that can provide Web conferencing, Webinar, remote support and remote access. The idea behind RHUB's software is a technology it calls Guaranteed Attendance. Only the participant hosting the call has to download and install a software client, while other participants not only don't need software, but can access the meeting using any type of Web browser.

Most of RHUB's business is indirect, with a small group of U.S.-based channel partners. It has caught on a lot faster in places like South Africa and the U.K., where revenue growth has been robust, and boasts distributors throughout the world.

The OEM route has also been fruitful for the company; last summer it struck a deal with Hitachi Ltd. to embed TurboMeeting into Hitachi's teleconferencing products, and it also has similar deals with Zultys, Central Desktop, Huddle and other vendors.

The 4-in-1 TurboMeeting appliance comes in six models, with the low-end TM-200 -- up to 4 meeting rooms and 20 concurrent users -- starting at $995. That investment, RHUB argues, pays for itself in as short as a few months, compared to the subscription-based services offered by competitors.

Higher-end versions of the appliance, which are 1U rackmount chassis-sized, get into the $5,495-and-higher range, for much larger meeting room and concurrent user capacities. The top model, TM-1000, can support 500 meeting rooms and 2,000 concurrent users.

RHUB also sells remote support appliances in two models: the TS-300, which at $1,995 offers a max capacity of 10 concurrent supporter workstations, and the TS-700, whose max capacity is 50 concurrent support workstations, priced per deployment.

TurboMeeting's latest software update, version 4.3, launched in early March, and includes a high-definition VoIP softphone to let users conduct web-based audioconferences with more than 200 participants.

"You're hosting the audio yourself, and your appliance becomes the router to the conference call," said RHUB's Dorie. "What we like about is that between video IP conferencing and web conferencing, we've become a pretty good UC solution. And partners can do as much integration as they want."

According to RHUB, the softphone includes echo-cancellation, firewall traversal, automated audio device detection and auto-reconnection, as well as a range of recording and recording conversion functions, and extended LDAP integration.

RHUB's channel efforts received a big boost in 2010, following its launch of the RHUB Global Web Conferencing Service Reseller program in November. The program enables solution providers to offer branded, hosted web conferencing services behind RHUB's TurboMeeting technology, and either let RHUB do the hosting, or host the service themselves using a RHUB appliance.

"Either they host it, or we do," Dorie explained. "We can provide the hardware, manage it remotely, have it be customized by the partner."

That type of business will pick up, he added, as more traditional VARs make leap to branded, hosted conferencing communications and feel more comfortable about the delivery model. RHUB's cost and revenue-sharing models for partners in the program are negotiable.

"The channel is just now getting to where it can deal with hosted solutions and a recurring revenue model," he said. "it's a harder concept to get across to a lot of these channel partners but it's our kind of channel."

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