



THE PHOENIX COYOTES CARRY THEIR GUESTS' ENTERTAINMENT EXPERIENCE TO THE 'NEXT LEVEL'

NORTEL



Case Study

In partnering with Nortel, the Phoenix Coyotes are introducing new, revenue-enhancing guest services today, with a foundation for still more tomorrow.

Jobing.com Arena

The Jobing.com Arena is responding to an industry imperative, leveraging new technology to provide their guests, staff and vendors with a richer multimedia experience.

Challenge: To provide the 1.2 million guests that attend events at the Jobing.com Arena with a more complete, interactive communications experience. These guests include fans of the National Hockey League's Phoenix Coyotes and the National Lacrosse League's Arizona Sting as well as guests to concerts, tradeshows and other events that the arena hosts on an almost daily basis. The objective was to provide guests with an enhanced entertainment experience, thereby creating new revenue opportunities for the organization. The IT team also sought to increase the staff, event production teams and promoters' productivity and efficiency with high-speed, reliable, secure and seamless communications from anywhere onsite.

Solution: The Coyotes chose a complete Nortel voice, data, multimedia and mobility offering to help transform Jobing.com Arena into a state-of-the-art facility. This solution includes the Nortel Communication Server 1000, IP Phones 2007 and 1140, Application Gateway 1000s, Ethernet Routing Switch 8600, Ethernet Routing Switch 5520s with Power over Ethernet, CallPilot Unified Messaging, Nortel Contact Center and WLAN 2300 access points.



“We wanted to put in an infrastructure that would allow us to offer innovative and advanced services to our staff and clients today and in the future. By working with Nortel to develop and implement the right solution, we’ve achieved that objective.”

— Christine Stoffel, Vice President of IT and Strategic Operations for the Phoenix Coyotes, Arizona Sting and Jobing.com Arena

Benefits: The Arena is now capable of offering the type of guest-experience enhancements that every entertainment venue in the industry is striving to provide. With a comprehensive communications infrastructure in place, the Coyotes organization now has the foundation to build an intelligent environment from which it can offer a wide range of high-performance, secure services today with an evolutionary path into the future. This solution is an excellent example of how organizations are taking advantage of the global Hyperconnectivity mega-trend — where anything that can be connected will be connected — to provide customers and staff with an anywhere, anytime “personal broadband” experience across the devices of their choice.

Hockey in the desert? You better believe it. Big time hockey. National Hockey League hockey.

Ever heard of a guy named Gretzky? Wayne Gretzky? On the bench and in the front offices of the Phoenix Coyotes — as head coach and managing partner — is where you’ll find “The Great One”, the greatest the game has ever produced. Top-shelf; only the finest — that’s what we’re talkin’ when we’re talkin’ hockey in the Valley of the Sun.

When the Phoenix Coyotes arrived in Arizona ten years ago, it was their intention to provide an unmatched entertainment experience. Same with the National Lacrosse League’s Arizona Sting: field an exciting, competitive team and provide a first-rate entertainment experience. Similarly, the objective of Jobing.com Arena is to attract fans and guests with the hottest acts and the most prestigious events — in short, to provide a world-class facility to which both guests and entertainers give an enthusiastic thumbs-up.

The outcome to date? Success. Madonna has performed. U2, too. Sports fans are turning out to enjoy the action. Graduation ceremonies, tradeshow, exhibits — Jobing.com Arena is the place to be.

But the bar continues to rise. Extending that ultimate guest experience is increasingly a challenge. It requires providing guests with a full-out multimedia experience — connectivity, interaction, easier access to concessions, in the door and to your seat more expeditiously — and providing internal staff and production teams with the communications tools they require, wherever and whenever they need them.

The Phoenix Coyotes ownership and executive team understood this. They made the commitment to providing the ultimate experience — inviting Nortel to enter the arena.

Catering to the technologically savvy

“A year ago, our owners and executive management came to the realization that cutting-edge communications technology is critical to building an advanced facility — not only in the corporate offices but in the arena,” says Christine Stoffel, Vice President of IT and Strategic Operations for the Phoenix Coyotes, Arizona Sting and Jobing.com Arena. “We needed to think outside the box, and research and partner with the right companies in order to achieve our objectives.”

As the team began to discuss their objectives, they recognized, says Stoffel, “that our fans and guests are very technologically savvy,” and that expectations of what *could and should* be provided at the arena were high. The team welcomed that as a challenge.

Unfortunately the communications infrastructure the organization was using was a mix of voice and data equipment with limited capabilities and historically poor performance. “We had very limited 10 mb and 100 mb switches and we had no wireless capability in the arena or the corporate offices. As a result, there was a tremendous amount of congestion across the network.” says the Coyotes’ senior director of IT Jay Gaskin. “When event days came up, the venue would start using the network and our office staff would see slowdowns. We wanted to eliminate that bottleneck and ensure consistent performance for everyone — no matter the day and the traffic traveling our network.”

The Coyotes IT team put out an RFP for a significant network upgrade, requiring quite a bit of new gear. Stoffel and Gaskin met with engineers and sales folks from several companies — some of whom tried to impress them with, in Gaskin’s words, “the glitz and glam of their operations,” which the Arena was not interested in.

Nortel stood out right from the start.

“The number one thing we were looking for was a partner that would provide advanced customer service and superior partnership in helping evaluate our needs and develop our strategic direction,” says Stoffel. “From the beginning, the level of customer service and responsiveness Nortel provided was fantastic. Within a week of the RFP, Nortel staff were onsite, working with us to define our needs today and in the future. When we considered the options that could fit our long-term needs, Nortel was far superior.”

Thus began a productive partnership.

A solid foundation for today and tomorrow

Working with Nortel, Jobing.com Arena implemented a complete voice, data, wireless and multimedia communications system — extending secure, high-speed Internet access, advanced voice services and customized applications throughout the Arena. Leveraging Nortel’s Ethernet Routing Switch models 8600 and 5520 provides high-speed, reliable communications, eliminating the frequent bottlenecks and system crashes experienced with the former multi-vendor environment.

“The Nortel Ethernet switches provide gigabit connectivity with Power over Ethernet in each of our 22 telecom closets across the arena, as well as in our corporate offices,” Stoffel says, “We’ve replaced our previous unreliable and slow system with a high-performance data network that is secure and reliable. We’ve gone from zero reliability to 100 percent. Now the only downtime we experience is scheduled maintenance.”

Thirty-five Nortel Wireless LAN 2300 access points throughout the Arena ensure staff, vendors and guests have high-speed communications no matter where they are. According to Stoffel, “the Nortel wireless architecture we chose provided 1.5 times more functionality at a lower cost than competing offers.”

The Arena has also implemented Nortel’s flagship voice over IP (VoIP) system, the Communication Server 1000 and extended applications to Nortel’s IP Phones 2007 and 1140 in conference rooms and luxury suites. Supported by Nortel’s Application Gateway 1000s, guests can use the multimedia screen on the IP desk sets to view upcoming information on events or games. The Coyotes IT team is continuing to partner with Nortel to access the limitless possibilities of the IP Phones for the future.

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Mobile ticketing kiosk

Staff have benefited from the upgrades as well. According to Stoffel, “With Nortel’s CallPilot unified messaging, we’ve reduced the number of fax machines from eight to one. Integrating fax, voicemail and email into a single, consolidated inbox has increased staff productivity by 25 to 30 percent.”

And the efficiency gains don’t stop there.

Gaskin says: “Before we had one wireless access point and it would go up and down every couple of hours. With the Nortel Wireless LAN in place, we provide 100 percent coverage, 100 percent uptime.” Media and photographers can use the new wireless service to securely and instantaneously upload and update files — providing more up-to-the-minute coverage. “Media at our events need reliable wireless coverage. This stability is definitely a huge advantage for us.”

Production crews and promoters of concerts and other events are, according to Stoffel, “really reaping the benefits.” During elaborate set-ups involving perhaps hundreds of crew members, they’re able to stay in communication with one another and to access online resources with no congestion. “They’re very, very happy about that, and we’re continuing to heavily promote it. Stoffel calls it “absolutely” a competitive advantage.

One direction for the future

Most fundamental to the success of this deployment was a shared understanding between the Coyotes staff and Nortel that the communications system isn’t the end-game, but the beginning of a truly state-of-the-art arena experience. Where “the rubber hits the road” is in the delivery of that ultimate guest experience: What would it take to bring in the finest acts and the most select events? What were fans and guests expecting once in the doors? How could the experience be carried beyond that? And by what creative means could revenue opportunities be realized?

With a comprehensive communications infrastructure as the base, the Coyotes have the foundation on which to build an intelligent environment filled with new, media-rich applications and services capable of creating new revenue opportunities and improving the overall fan experience.

The Coyotes are looking, for example, at supporting new services in their luxury suites like using the IP phone set to control the in-suite LCD screen — typically used to show the game. This lets the LCD display customized advertising and presentations; access and display rich-media content like player statistics, team standings, arena information, highlight reels and custom camera angles; and integrate payment options onto the VoIP phones so that if a group of guests in a luxury suite decide they want to purchase ten jerseys, says Stoffel, “they can get on the phone and order those jerseys and have them delivered directly from the merchandise stand to the suite. This not only adds to our revenues but, more importantly, improves that fan’s overall event experience.”

Wireless technology can support mobile ticketing kiosks that allow event attendees to upgrade current tickets or purchase tickets for future events through a standalone, mobile unit as well as wireless notepads so that sales agents walking the concourses can register guests for promotions or sell them tickets for another event, with the information going directly into a database.

Similarly, by leveraging wireless point-of-sale terminals, wait times for concession and product purchases can be streamlined. Staff can take orders and payments for food, jerseys and tickets from guests that are waiting in line or in their seats. Fans will spend less time in line-ups and more time cheering for the Coyotes or Sting!

The arena is also looking at interactive hand-held devices to act like a multimedia program. Fans can access content from the device such as instant replays, video clips, onsite fan discussion groups and special contests.

The ability to deliver new services opens up new opportunities to the Arena to high-value services and captures a greater amount of their clientele's discretionary spending. It also helps the Arena attract a new customer base — becoming a state-of-the-art convention center or corporate meeting facility, to name just a few.

“Technology is at the forefront of creating a memorable experience for our fans. With the solid communications foundation we have put in place with Nortel, we have the ability to add innovative new services that will make our arena attractive to both existing and new clients and events — ensuring our arena is booked with a maximum number of events,” said Stoffel.

The right choice

Stoffel and Gaskin say that the IT team briefly considered a mixed-vendor approach to offer greater flexibility and better service, but quickly determined that wasn't the way to go. Stoffel said “The Nortel team became so superior in providing us customer solutions and customer support ... it just gives us one direction to look for assistance, one direction to look for in future technologies.”

“We were originally looking at keeping the multi-vendor environment we had in place. But once we started working with Nortel, it was very clear they could provide the solutions and responsive customer service we were looking for. Why would we want to look any further? We have everything we need today and in the future with Nortel.”



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In the United States:

Nortel
35 Davis Drive
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709 USA

In Europe:

Nortel
Maidenhead Office Park, Westacott Way
Maidenhead Berkshire SL6 3QH UK

In Canada:

Nortel
195 The West Mall
Toronto, Ontario M9C 5K1 Canada

In Asia:

Nortel
United Square
101 Thomson Road
Singapore 307591
Phone: (65) 6287 2877

In Caribbean and Latin America:

Nortel
1500 Concorde Terrace
Sunrise, FL 33323 USA

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