



Tex-Link Communications Connects with Network Hardware Resale for Affordable, Responsive and Reliable Alternate Source for Best-of-Class Cisco Gear

Tex-Link Communications Inc. is a competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC) that serves the “Big 4” markets in Texas—Dallas, Houston, Austin and San Antonio. Founded in 1991, the company offers customized, competitively priced voice and data services to small and medium-sized businesses as well as tailored voice offerings to more than 50 percent of the Internet service providers in the Lone Star State.

Over the years, Tex-Link has relied on best-of-class technology and a continuing commitment to customer service to uphold its motto of “Connecting Texas is our Business.” To that end, the San Antonio-based carrier delivers 80 percent of its business via its own network, including Siemens EWSD Class 5 central office switches in each of its four markets.

In continuing to navigate the turbulent regulatory discord in the telecommunications industry, Tex-Link focuses on identifying creative, new revenue opportunities and responding quickly to fluctuating requirements. As a result, the company has undergone rapid network expansions to keep pace with increasing customer demand, including support for surging Internet traffic, which has grown by 400 percent annually for the past few years.

According to Pete Templin, manager of packet networks, much of Tex-Link’s success can be traced to keeping its corporate radar acutely tuned to emerging revenue possibilities in a constantly changing market. “When we see an opportunity, we must be able to move decisively to grab the greatest competitive advantage,” he says. “This means much of our network expansion comes quickly as the opportunities and projects emerge.”

The Challenges

For Tex-Link, as with most competitive carriers, the need to expedite network expansion while working within strict budget constraints leads to some daunting challenges. Tex-Link continues to run “a tight ship,” according to Templin. As a result, he often has little time

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**Pete Templin
Manager, Packet Networks
Tex-Link Communications Inc.**

to fulfill orders for networking gear. In 2004, the biggest hurdle yet was finding a viable yet cost-effective replacement for older Riverstone routers in the network core. Additional growth and the need to improve network efficiency meant that Tex-Link needed to find a higher-capacity, upgraded router alternative.

The Solution

In keeping with the company's underlying philosophy to deploy best-of-class technology whenever possible, Templin set his sights on incorporating Cisco routers into his burgeoning network environment. As a Cisco certified network professional (CCNP), design professional (CCDP) and Internet professional (CCIP), Templin is well versed on the advantages of Cisco equipment. While he was somewhat concerned about having sufficient budget to accommodate the influx of routers he anticipated Tex-Link would need, Templin approached Cisco for a bid.

He soon found the local office was not oriented to serve smaller service providers. When a remote office took over, they recommended 7206 routers, which Templin felt were insufficient for Tex-Link's fast-growing environment. After additional research, Templin decided that Cisco 7507 routers delivered ample capacity to accommodate the brisk network expansions. However, he realized that with multiple capital-intensive projects on both its voice and data networks, Tex-Link probably couldn't allocate sufficient funds to support a full Cisco network build-out. Then, Templin recalled Network Hardware Resale (NHR), a company from which he purchased networking cables about a year before.

Templin found the company's expertise in dealing with the specific equipment needs of service providers particularly appealing. He was intrigued with NHR's pricing as well as its procedures for ensuring product integrity and top-notch, expedient fulfillment. NHR's quick, knowledgeable response led to an initial purchase of "like new" 7507 routers at 85 percent off Cisco's list price. "We ended up getting a router that was one step higher," Templin says. "NHR provided a far better overall solution at a cost that was much less than the one we received from Cisco for a lower-capacity alternative."

This successful transaction started a succession of purchases from NHR, yet perhaps none provided a better example of how Tex-Link has come to rely on NHR than in the summer of 2005 when Tex-Link was in the midst of a network crisis. Several of the carrier's co-location customers ordered a large amount of Ethernet services, which overburdened a low-density solution already in place. Within 24 hours, the carrier had exhausted its port capacity in three of four markets, forcing Tex-Link into an immediate search for GSR routers for the network core while redeploying the existing ones for network attachment.

"Buying new routers could require waiting six, eight—or more—weeks," Templin says. "Not only didn't we have that kind of time, our budget didn't permit it."

So again, he placed a call to NHR. And once again, the company's fast response came to the rescue, securing the needed routers and expediting shipment to Tex-Link.

The Benefits

Today, Tex-Link's network has grown to include some 30 Cisco routers from NHR. Regardless of the type, NHR consistently offers Tex-Link the best price per port of any equipment provider. In fact, Templin's relationship with NHR has grown to the point that he now calculates Tex-Link's purchases based on the turnaround time NHR can provide. "Whether I need something overnight or in four weeks, I know NHR will deliver," he says.

Aside from maintaining an extensive inventory of the most in-demand pre-owned gear, Templin remains equally impressed with NHR's dedication to providing the best quality, pre-tested products—all with a one-year warranty. "While a 90-day warranty is good enough for the vast majority of our purchases," notes Templin. "The one-year warranty is fantastic, providing unbeatable peace of mind."

Equally reassuring is the diagnostic output that NHR provides with every device purchased, which offers Templin an extra measure of confidence in product quality. "It's apparent that NHR goes the extra mile in cleaning the chassis, replacing components as necessary and installing additional memory to support my configurations," he says.

Tex-Link relies on NHR for front-line service and network expansion. "Because so many of our purchase decisions are made at the last moment, we can't afford to take a chance on another supplier," explains Templin. "I know NHR provides the same level of excellent service and support whether I purchase \$40 cables or \$175,000 worth of networking gear."

Templin adds NHR recently went "above and beyond the call of duty" when Tex-Link had a router failure that required immediate attention. The replacement was expedited to Tex-Link overnight. "That isn't something the OEM would do," he says. "NHR gives us great response and always escalates to meet the criticality of our needs, which is key since the network is the backbone of our business."

As such, Tex-Link now relies extensively on NHR-provided Cisco gear for front-line service and network expansion. Tex-Link has spent more than \$600,000 with NHR in the past two years. Templin estimates that it would have cost five times more to purchase new gear from the original manufacturer—an option that didn't exist for this fast-growing yet budget-conscious service provider.

"Tex-Link would not be here today operating on such a stable networking platform if it were not for NHR," concludes Templin. "They've become a trusted ally whose honesty, reliability and responsiveness make them stand out."

Solution Snapshot

Customer: Tex-Link Communications Inc., a competitive service provider based in San Antonio. On the Web at www.texlink.com.

Industry: Telecommunications

Challenges:

- Network expansion needs emerge quickly.
- Response time for securing needed gear is shorter than OEMs can serve.
- Tight budget restricts purchasing power.

Benefits:

- Purchasing pre-owned network gear delivers more value for the dollars spent.
- Most purchases can be delivered overnight or within 48 hours.
- One-year warranty allays any concerns regarding reliability.

About Network Hardware Resale

Network Hardware Resale (NHR) is a leading provider of pre-owned Cisco, Extreme and Juniper networking equipment. The company also is an authorized reseller of resilient, massively scalable networking gear from Force10 Networks. Founded in 1986, the Santa Barbara, Calif.-based organization has been recognized by Inc. Magazine as one of America's fastest-growing private companies and honored by VARBusiness magazine as one of North America's top technology integrators. NHR provides global sales and network support services from its locations in the United States, Asia and Europe. More than 10,000 organizations worldwide purchase quality networking equipment from NHR, including Global 1000 companies, small and mid-sized enterprises, government entities, educational institutions, healthcare organizations and telecommunications service providers. For more information, visit www.networkhardware.com.



**NORTH AMERICAN
CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS**

26 Castilian Drive, Suite A
Santa Barbara, CA 93117

Tel 1.805.964.9975
Toll Free 1.800.451.3407
Fax 1.805.964.9405



**EUROPEAN CORPORATE
HEADQUARTERS**

Merchants Court - Amsterdam
Singaporestraat 66
1175 RA Lijnden
The Netherlands

Tel +31 (0) 20 449 6910
Toll Free from UK, Germany &
France 00800 6565 6464
Fax +31 (0) 20 449 6923



**ASIA-PACIFIC CORPORATE
HEADQUARTERS**

15A Changi Business Park Central 1
#01-03 Eigthrium
Singapore 486035

Tel +65 6411 7388
Fax +65 6411 7399



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