

SYSTIMAX®

SOLUTIONS

High Performance Networking Speeds Share Dealing

Charles Schwab is a market leader in the provision of online broking services. Use of the Internet to offer its 150,000 active clients share information and trading facilities is just one way the company employs advanced communications.

When the company planned its new customer service center at Milton Keynes in the UK, it wanted both high performance cabled and wireless networks to maintain its competitive edge. The four-floor building would contain a dealing room from where a team of dealers would buy and sell stocks for clients across the continent. This demanded that every desk could have many simultaneous open telephone lines and constant access to on-line services including Bloomberg, Reuters and world stock exchanges.

Also planned for the new building was an extensive call center operation, which would be the first contact point for clients buying, selling and inquiring over the telephone. As in the dealing room, fast and reliable communication was mission-critical for the call center.

To meet the cabling side of its requirements, the company looked for a high specification system conforming with the latest Class E standards and capable of ensuring optimal end-to-end channel performance. It also wanted to see a proven, world-wide operational record. For the wireless application, an equally reliable product, giving throughput comparable with 10BASE-T Ethernet was required. The list of suppliers who could tender convincingly for both applications contained just three names.

The winning tender for the contract came from Birmingham-based networking specialists, CDI (Central Data Installations). The systems they proposed were the SYSTIMAX® GigaSPEED® Solution and Avaya Orinoco Solution. All the components for both these could be supplied off-the-shelf by the distributor, Anixter.



Anixter, which operates from 200 locations in 35 countries, also provides network design, engineering and maintenance backup to System Integrators such as CDI. The stock which Anixter hold ensures that any new or replacement parts needed for Avaya or SYSTIMAX® Solutions can be delivered within 48 hours in over 90 per cent of cases.

The system installed, features fiber backbones combined with GigaSPEED UTP copper cabling runs to data and telephone outlets. Designed, engineered and manufactured by SYSTIMAX Solutions™ as an end-to-end system, the GigaSPEED cables, connectors and cords match perfectly with each other to ensure channel performance exceeding the Class E requirements.

“UTP has the benefit of being widely used and easy to handle,” said Derek Saunders, Senior Manager in the Data Operations Center at Charles Schwab. “With the GigaSPEED Solution, we also have guaranteed gigabit throughput, so we can move from our current 100BASE-T to faster networking, such as 1000BASE-T Gigabit Ethernet, when the time comes.”

In addition to the cabling infrastructure, the company needed a wireless LAN to serve Schwab staff visiting the European HQ from other offices world-wide. Complementing the “hot desking” approach that was to be used, wireless links offered simple, cost-effective network access, as well as user mobility.

“A high performance wireless system offered clear advantages in flexibility, allowing staff from any office to walk in with a laptop and start work virtually anywhere,” said Derek Saunders. “But as well as performance, sourcing the system from the same supplier as our cabling installation was a key consideration.”

During installation, a key part of CDI's approach was to put a dedicated project manager on the site. This ensured the work ran smoothly and made it easier to co-ordinate with other contractors fitting out the building at the same time.

The finished cabling installation has over 5,000 floor mounted outlets providing data links together with 1600 voice connections. SYSTIMAX PATCHMAX® patching hardware, using RJ45 connectors, is located in eight communications rooms, two on each floor. These are interconnected to give maximum redundancy using 56 runs of 24-core fiber cable.

For the Orinoco requirement, CDI installed a WavePOINT transmitter/receiver on each level. These units are fitted with IEEE 802.11 conformant Turbo cards, providing network access at up to 11 Mb/s. To take advantage of this, Charles Schwab has purchased 50 Orinoco cards for laptop computers. As visiting staff arrive at the site, they are issued with one of these cards to plug into their computers. They can then sign on the company's systems as if they were in their own office.

“This means that people from anywhere in the world can be full productive immediately,” said Derek Saunders. “It also allows the network to accommodate the extra demand without additional hard-wired outlets.”

Derek Saunders has seen significant advantages in single-sourcing the complete cabling and wireless solutions. Commenting, he said: “Using a one-stop-shop has, as expected, simplified purchasing and installation, and eliminated compatibility worries.

“A vast amount of mission critical data enters and leaves our building every day and we have to know that our communications infrastructures, and the people who provide it, are working in harmony.”

To back up its quality promises, the SYSTIMAX 20-year Extended Product and Applications Assurance Warranty cover Charles Schwab's GigaSPEED installation. This not only covers cabling component quality, but also complete applications assurance. At SYSTIMAX Labs a comprehensive test program is continually extending the range of networking applications to which this applies.

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Derek Saunders, Senior Manager, Data Operations Center, Charles Schwab

Anixter is a Global Value Added Distributor of Networking and Structured Cabling Solutions with an unparalleled range of products and services. They are dedicated to providing complete communication infrastructure solutions through reseller channels. Their mission is to reduce the business costs of resellers and in so doing, provide end-user customers with the most cost effective solutions and services on the market.

Anixter has a COMPETence Technical Center with staging and demo facilities and 24 hour cover. Technical staff are trained to the highest standards and amongst them are 120 Registered Communication Distribution Designers (RCDDs). Anixter has its own training programs and facilities.

The Anixter and SYSTIMAX SCS Relationship
The Anixter and SYSTIMAX relationship has existed since Anixter's creation in 1957. Evolving in the USA, SYSTIMAX SCS was a key partner and supplier in the successful expansion of Anixter's business in Europe in 1988. The partnership continues to

develop and reach new highs via Anixter's network of System Integrators who are certified to design and install SYSTIMAX Structured Connectivity Solutions. In 1999 Anixter extended its relationship with SYSTIMAX SCS in EMEA, and added SYSTIMAX's data networking products to its portfolio - further enhancing its reputation as a high-tech 'one-stop-shop'.

For further information on Anixter visit www.Anixter.com.

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