



Case Study: CTI-PRO Adjusts to Changing Times with PIKA WARP Appliance for Asterisk

Customer: CTI-PRO Ltd. is one of the largest distributors of computer telephony hardware in Central and Eastern Europe. www.ctipro.cz. Also: www.lemonway.com

Challenge: Adjust to the market's shift toward IP and software-based telephony applications

Solution: PIKA WARP Appliance

Benefits: CTI-PRO has re-invigorated its business with a new offering that enables its system integrator and CTI developer customers to deliver all-in-one IP and SIP-based telephony solutions to small- and mid-size markets. Both CTI-PRO and its System Integrator customers have a new revenue-generating vehicle

As one of the largest suppliers of computer telephony integration (CTI) hardware to Central and Eastern Europe, CTI-PRO Ltd. has a strong understanding of this market. Over the last few years, the distributor has seen the most significant shift in the industry to date: the shift toward software-based telephony solutions.

Petr Spacil, Sales Manager at CTI-PRO, says, "Until a few years ago, our business was telephony boards. Today, the world is completely different – now there are many SIP implementations where boards aren't needed. Our business is shifting quickly from boards to software and pure-IP."

CTI-PRO is adjusting to this new market reality with the PIKA WARP Appliance – an Asterisk®-based, IP-ready platform. The WARP Appliance is enabling CTI-PRO to meet the changing needs of its system integrator (SI) customers, and provides the

platform for a new end-user focused business.

Making the Shift

Traditionally the largest distributor of Dialogic telephony boards in Central and Eastern Europe, CTI-PRO has experienced a sudden and significant reduction in its board business over the last few years. "To stay viable, we had to address the need for CTI software and IP-based applications," Spacil says.

While the company had experience selling end-user ready products – such as fax software solutions and a unified communications PBX – CTI-PRO had never directly addressed the small- and mid-size business (SMB) market. This is where the most immediate opportunity for an appliance-based, embedded IP-PBX solution exists, with SMBs seeking more advanced telephony features and applications without the costs and hassles of traditional, expensive PBXs.

CTI-PRO is using the PIKA WARP Appliance for Asterisk to better address the needs of its existing customers (SIs and CTI developers) and to address SMBs directly. A new sister company, LEMONWAY, enables CTI-PRO to provide complete telephony solutions via the WARP Appliance.

"We are offering the WARP as a replacement to traditional PBXs," Spacil confirms. "WARP is highly configurable so it's a good platform to meet many customer needs. It can be deployed as a pure-SIP PBX, hybrid SIP/ISDN/BRI telephony, for SIP extensions with no TDM, or as a SIP gateway to the TDM."

Jiri Nahlik, Product Manager for the WARP portfolio at CTI-PRO, explains, “Our main strategy is to provide WARP to our SI customers who are working on Asterisk. We’d like them to move to the WARP platform because it is small, embedded and doesn’t consume much power. Currently, our customers are offering commercial PBXs on huge servers which need additional hardware and support. The WARP Appliance is a better way to offer those same solutions.

Through LEMONWAY, CTI-PRO also targets “Small companies that would like to move from a traditional TDM PBX to a VOIP PBX,” Nahlik adds. “In that case, WARP is a complete PBX solution, and we are modifying it for multiple languages and customer-specific features.”

Embedded is Better

Both Nahlik and Spacil note that the embedded nature of the WARP Appliance is a big selling point. “With WARP you don’t need to buy a big server with moving parts and all the complications that come with that,” Nahlik says. “It’s like a router, so you don’t need a lot of power or space.”

The WARP Appliance also provides an all-in-one solution that can incorporate both PBX functionality and various applications. “This is the big benefit of WARP because it is easily modifiable,” Nahlik adds.

Spacil notes that the WARP Appliance roadmap will strengthen the all-in-one value proposition over time. He cites PIKA’s plans for adding GSM expansion modules as an example. “GSM is very popular in Europe and it allows for least-cost routing and sending SMS messages, which is very popular here.”

Simple, Reliable and Profitable

The embedded appliance is also beneficial because, “No moving parts means that it’s more reliable in terms of hours between failures,” Spacil adds. He says that the appliance’s remote access feature is also important to system integrators because, “Remote access allows them to easily support their customers – they can diagnose problems remotely, and that saves the costs of driving to the customer location.”

For the CTI-PRO customers who are now rebuilding their solutions and firmware onto the WARP Appliance, Nahlik says that the platform is proving to be simple to program on. “Our SIs are very strong in Asterisk and they have customized their Asterisk applications. They are having absolutely no problems transferring those applications to the WARP.”

And that means faster time-to-market – and time-to-revenue – for both CTI-PRO and its customers. “The PIKA WARP Appliance improves our revenue outlook by enabling us to better address the changing CTI market,” Spacil summarizes. “At the same time, our customers benefit because they are able to sell a complete solution with services and support – WARP gives them long-term revenue opportunities.”

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