

PBX Developer Reduces Costs, Increases Platform Stability with PIKA

Customer: Slacht offers a wall-mounted IP-PBX phone system that meets all enterprise communications requirements including phone, instant messaging and e-mail.

Challenge: To offer the same reliability as established PBX solutions in a more user-friendly fashion and at a fraction of the cost.

Solution: Standardize on the PIKA platform using PIKA InLine and Digital Gateway Board technologies.

Benefits: Slacht has reduced its board vendor support costs, and the reliability of PIKA boards lets Slacht offer a stable solution to small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Slacht, a division of Tuxenergy Ltd, had an ambitious mandate: create an in-house IP-PBX telephone system that offers the features and stability of a large enterprise PBX system, but at a price small- and medium size businesses could afford.

“Our objective was to create a system that would meet customer demands for stability, scalability and usability and meet all business communications requirements,” explains Kevin Buckley, Managing Director at Slacht. “Above all, though, we wanted it to have reasonable installation, operating and expansion costs.”

To keep costs down, Slacht looked to open-source software in the development of its solution. By combining a variety of new and existing open-source technologies, it hoped to offer a modern phone system that could handle telework and voice-over Internet protocol (VOIP) needs at a fraction of the cost of traditional in-house PBX systems.

“We also wanted Slacht to be a one-stop communications shop,” says Buckley. “It doesn’t make sense for a small company to have to buy a phone system application, a separate instant messaging tool and an e-mail system on top of that — we wanted to offer a solution that rolled all of those applications into one.”

Putting the Pieces Together

Slacht knew that using open-source technology would help reduce the company’s development costs, but it also had to find reasonably priced digital boards to include in its hardware offering if it was to truly offer a low-cost solution. Slacht also required a platform that would interface with Asterisk, an open-source PBX and telephony toolkit.

“In the beginning, we looked at Asterisk’s Digium hardware offerings, but found them too expensive,” recalls Buckley. “We sell through partners and we knew that we had to find a more reasonably priced board to keep pricing down for our partners and, ultimately, our end users.”

In searching for a board provider, Slacht discovered PIKA Technologies. “We could see right away that PIKA offered solid technology,” says Buckley. “It supported our open-source technologies of choice — Asterisk and Mandriva Linux — and it offered echo cancellation, something the other vendors we looked at did not feature. Best of all, the price was right.”

Slacht also felt comfortable dealing with PIKA. “We approached a number of companies and got the best response from PIKA,” recalls Buckley. “They were enthusiastic and seemed genuinely interested in working with us. We never got that sense from the other vendors we researched.”

Stable Solution, Ideal Price Point

Slacht selected PIKA's InLine and Digital Gateway boards and hasn't looked back. "With PIKA's four-port boards in place, we can offer Slacht at our ideal price point and ensure that our end users receive a stable solution that can scale as their company grows," Buckley explains. "As a company adds employees, it can unlock additional ports using only a license key — this simplifies things for our customers, and our partners are happy, too, because they don't have to spend their time swapping out boards, switching out cards or installing new drivers at customer sites."

Today, Slacht is aggressively promoting its solution across Europe and is pleased with initial successes. "We're one of the few PBX vendors who offer an easy-to-use solution and our customers like that" says Buckley. "We have a simple graphical interface and installation wizard that lets customers put a CD into our hardware and install everything they need. Thanks to the PIKA boards, once the customer installs Slacht, it stays working and offers a reliable communications solution."

Slacht has also been able to offer its application at an attractive price point. "To build our system with any other board, we would have to increase the price by over 1,000 Euros," says Buckley. "The PIKA boards give us quite a price advantage, and our partners tell us that no competitor can beat the functionality and cost combination we offer."

Looking to the Future

Now that Slacht has standardized on the PIKA platform Buckley is bullish about Slacht's future. "Going forward, we'd like to develop some industry-specific solutions and offer additional product and feature variations. We're also planning to expand our sales across Europe. We know that with the PIKA platform our solution will be stable in any corporate environment, so we'd like to reach out to new customer bases and let other companies benefit from Slacht."

Buckley also hopes to build on the strong relationship his company has forged with PIKA Technologies. "They've worked closely with us from the start, and their support has been excellent."

About PIKA Technologies Inc.

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PIKA Technologies designs and manufactures computer plug in voice cards and software that connect a computer system to both TDM- and IP-based networks to provide advanced voice services. For almost two decades PIKA Technologies has been serving companies around the world that require voice cards to design sophisticated phone services for recording systems, voice services applications, and PC-PBX systems. The company has built a reputation for delivering innovative products and exceptional technical support by working closely with its customers. Headquartered in Ottawa, ON, Canada, the company has ranked in The Branham300, an authoritative ranking of successful Canadian high tech firms, for four consecutive years. Visit www.pikatechnologies.com or call +1-613-591-1555 for more information.



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