PIKA TECHNOLOGIES INC.

Case Study: Eurolux Provides Localized IP-PBX to SMEs in Europe with PIKA WARP Appliance

Customer: Eurolux develops and sells IP-PBX systems and gateway solutions in Slovenia and Russia

Challenge: Develop a localized IP-PBX solution ideal for small- and mid-size enterprises in Europe

Solution: PIKA WARP Appliance for Asterisk and FreePBX

Benefits: Successfully developed a small-scale unified communications platform for the SME market to increase revenue opportunities. Localized the PBX and phone interfaces in multiple languages thereby increasing market accessibility. Custom developed numerous unique out-of-the-box and custom applications to give a competitive advantage.

Since its inception in 1997, Slovenia-based Eurolux has grown to become the region's largest IT systems integrator. In 2009, the company began to pursue a new telecommunications line of business.

Recognizing an emerging business opportunity in Eastern Europe and beyond, Janez Černe, Director of Eurolux and his team set out to develop and sell a feature-rich and affordable IP-PBX suitable for small- and mid-size enterprises (SME). The company chose the PIKA WARP Appliance with Asterisk® and FreePBX® as its platform, which has enabled Eurolux to develop an easily customizable solution and many innovative applications.

The Right Hardware Platform

Initially, Eurolux set out to build its own Asterisk-based IP-PBX, but quickly realized the limitations of that approach. Damjan Kresal, Technical Director at Eurolux, explains: "When you are selling a PC-based system it's hard to sell it like a product, because it looks like just a PC with applications. And as a business model it's not a sound choice because the intellectual property is too easy to copy."

Eurolux "deeply" tested a number of potential platforms for its new IP-PBX. "The common weakness with most of the options is that they are closed systems," says Černe. "Their functionality and capacity is very specific, and then we would be stuck with those limitations, not being able to add what customers want and need. We have the ideas and the knowledge to develop innovative new services and functionality but the closed systems made it difficult to do that."

Not so with the PIKA WARP Appliance. "WARP is built with embedded hardware and dedicated expansion modules so it's not easy to copy," Kresal explains. "And its motherboard doesn't require any ventilators so it's very good to install in an office. Everything about the WARP Appliance is put together in an efficient way, including its price. It's a great concept!"

Černe says that Eurolux chose the PIKA WARP Appliance based on four primary characteristics:

- **Professional platform** – "In terms of the design of the hardware, the components used and how it's engineered, the WARP appliance is built by people with telephony knowledge and experience."

- **Open architecture** – "We can build new applications and solutions that aren't available in traditional telephony systems and some that are not yet fully realized in IP telephony."

- **Modular** – "If we need ISDN BRI we add that module; if we need analog trunks, we add that module, and for IP, we don't need any modules – so we can build the right solution for each individual customer."

- **Multi-connectivity** – "PIKA supports analog PSTN, ISDN BRI and GSM connectivity. In our markets, traditional connectivity is still present 98% of the time and IP voice is just emerging. We will be fully ready for all scenarios."

Developing Differentiated Services

Kresal says that, once the Asterisk / FreePBX development platform was in place, creating new services and applications for the WARP Appliance was an efficient process. Some of those features include presence (users can see the status of other users on the system) and a Skype gateway that enables users to place and receive Skype calls through their IP business phones. Eurolux has also localized its EURO IP-PBX system in multiple languages, including the web interface, PBX interface, and Aastra IP phones.

"Our goal is to offer all of the features that are supported in more expensive systems, like Alcatel," Černe explains. "But we can offer customers only the functions they want or need to keep the cost down – we are most proud of the flexibility we can offer."

The WARP appliance can serve a variety of needs, including acting as a gateway to the existing PSTN, as an IP-PBX product for SMEs, as a unified communications solution for mobile service providers, and as a backup registrar.

Kresal elaborates: "With our WARP appliance based solution we can implement not only a SIP gateway but also a backup SIP registrar in case a connection fails. This is needed in many corporate environments and we couldn't do it previously in a price-efficient way. With the PIKA WARP appliance we can provide backup via PSTN, ISDN BRI or GSM lines."
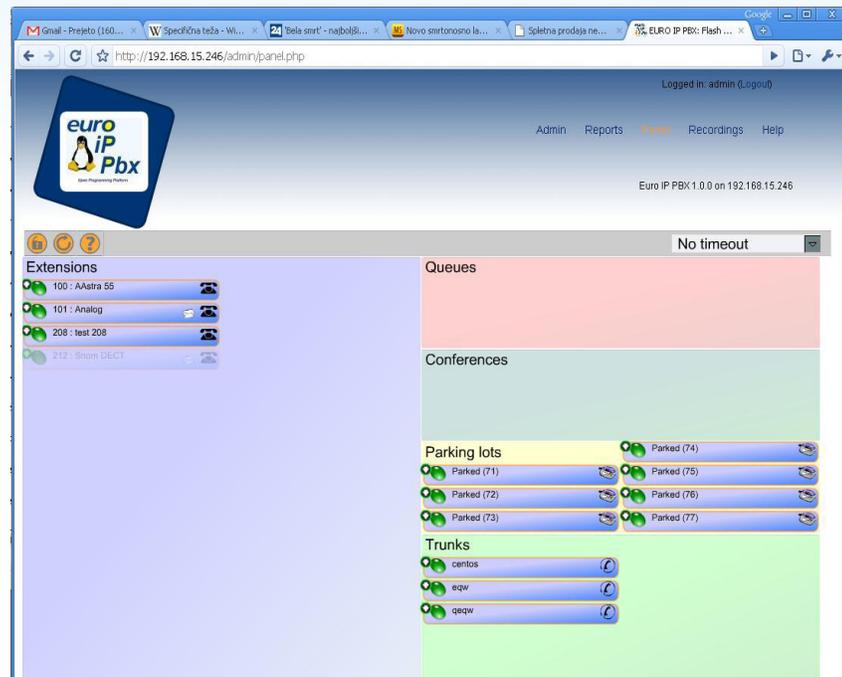
Positive Market Reaction

"Based on the market reaction and support we are getting from PIKA, we know we are on the right track with EURO IP-PBX," Černe says. Eurolux has begun to sell the system as a customer-premise product with service to local markets.

"If the customer has experience with IP voice, we focus on the system's functionality and the localization," he adds. "If they are not experienced or aware of IP voice, we show them that the system provides standard telephony features with the ability to upgrade to add many new features such as VoIP, as they are ready for it. We are also considering a hosted PBX service offering for Service Providers."

Beyond enabling Eurolux to pursue its business plan for delivering IP telephony to SMEs with the best price/performance quotient, Černe says, " PIKA WARP Appliance with Asterisk and FreePBX enabled helps us implement features 10 to 15 times faster than we were able to using a PC-based platform."

Sample of a Customized FreePBX Flash Operator Panel

About PIKA Technologies

PIKA Technologies for over two decades has been providing developers with the tools they need to build advanced voice and fax applications like IP PBX, fax broadcast and self-service IVR. As the technology landscape has changed, so too has PIKA, building out its product offering so its customers can choose the right tool set for their applications.

In addition to its traditional line of hardware and software solutions, PIKA now offers a family of appliances and applications that provide top-quality performance out of the box. PIKA sells these products directly and also makes them available through its growing network of resellers and distributors. Known for its exceptional customer service, PIKA's customers can expect the same high level of personalized, fast support that the company has always delivered. Headquartered in Ottawa, Canada, the company has ranked in The Branham 300, an authoritative ranking of successful Canadian high tech firms, for nine consecutive years.

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