

CONCERTO NETWORKS WINS WITH TALKSWITCH

Concerto Networks, a leading Information Technology franchise operation in the US, Europe and New Zealand, knows how to maximize the productivity of its clients: create a 'simple office' and allow them to focus on their business and not their technology worries.

Concerto Networks Founder Ray Hivoral knows firsthand the frustrations that inefficient and ineffective IT consultants can bring to a business. And knowing that millions of other businesses were experiencing the same frustrations, he decided to do something about it.

Recognizing that most people who operate small businesses don't want to waste precious time fixing their computers, Hivoral founded Concerto Networks in September 2002 on the principle of making office life simple, cohesive, and more effective by amassing the collective energy of dozens of IT professionals from around the world to ensure clients from all markets of small- and medium-sized businesses receive exactly what they need to be successful in their industry.

Concerto Networks' commitment to quality and consistent IT business solutions has enabled the company to partner with some of the leading computer, information technology, and telecommunications players in the world. With a broad range of partners and affiliates like HP, Intel, Dell, McAfee Security, Sprint, and Verizon Wireless, Concerto Networks ensures that its franchisees can offer its clients the opportunity to get the most out of their outsourced IT professional.

TalkSwitch, an industry-leading designer of phone systems engineered specifically for small and multi-location businesses, is one of Concerto Networks' key partners. For the past 17 years, TalkSwitch — much like Concerto Networks — has surrounded itself with numerous partners who excel in providing the most advanced equipment to the small business market.

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Introduced to the Concerto Networks family by Indianapolis franchise owner and operator Mark Shearer in early 2007, TalkSwitch was quickly recognized as the ideal phone solution for Concerto Networks clients. After a decade with the United States Air Force Intelligence Agency, as well as 5 years with AT&T Solutions as the Senior Network Engineer for the worldwide MasterCard Network, Shearer had the expertise and the business savvy to know a special product when he saw one.

“I was first introduced to the TalkSwitch after one of my small business clients asked if I had a phone system that could fit his needs and his budget,” explains Shearer. “I didn't, and I quickly began researching some different options. I found a company called TalkSwitch, and its sales team answered my questions and set me up with a system that I could try out in my own office.”

After using a TalkSwitch system in his office for a month, Shearer knew he wouldn't have a problem installing a TalkSwitch in his client's offices. In fact, selling and supporting TalkSwitch systems would prove to be a simple, yet effective addition to the list of services he was already providing.

"One of my clients restored and remodelled an older building for office use," says Shearer. "The building was struck by lightning after being open for one day. The storm took out their entire network and their InterTel phone systems. Since telecommunications were essential to this company, I brought a 484vs unit and 8 TalkSwitch phones along with me. I set up the TalkSwitch system, reconfigured their network, and their computers. They were simply amazed that they had a working phone again over the span of an evening. The client ended up buying the TalkSwitch system I installed as it offered a lot more functionality for their business. In fact, the entire TalkSwitch system cost less than what they would have had to pay to get the old InterTel system repaired."

For Shearer, selling and supporting TalkSwitch phone systems is not only about offering a cheaper solution, it's about the overall quality, usability, and features the phone system solution gives the customer.

"I've received nothing but positive feedback from TalkSwitch users," he says.

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Shearer knew the potential in establishing a relationship with a company like TalkSwitch, and informed Concerto Networks' corporate headquarters of his successes with the phone system.

"After completing a couple of installations, I contacted our headquarters in San Diego and suggested a partnership with TalkSwitch would mean good things for us," says Shearer. "It was a win-win situation. TalkSwitch offered a good product that could easily be supported and serviced by our team of franchisees. It also helps that when a customer calls TalkSwitch from a city where we have a Concerto Networks franchise, the TalkSwitch sales team refers the business to that franchisee. It's worked out great, as it's easier for us to demonstrate what the system does and how it can help a small business."

Following the success in the Indianapolis office, multiple Concerto Networks franchisees across the United States and Ireland adopted TalkSwitch systems into their business solution arsenal and even began using TalkSwitch to leverage their sales pitch to potential customers.

This was the case in the Detroit franchise office.

"We're extremely comfortable with the TalkSwitch product and lead off our sales pitches with phone system solutions," says Scott MacMartin, Detroit franchise owner and operator. "Right off the bat, it's all about TalkSwitch and CBeyond — two key communications components for any small business. Then we go into detail about the computers and infrastructure support we can offer them."

Following a career as an automotive engineer, MacMartin opened the Detroit-area franchise and has been handling all service inquiries for Concerto Networks in the Motor City for close to two years.

“I was originally attracted to Concerto Networks after taking a closer look at their business model,” MacMartin explains. “I was very interested in operating a business-to-business (B2B) franchise that focused specifically on the small business market. Concerto appealed to me because of their outstanding vision, their appreciation for such an immense small business marketplace, and their dedication to providing the best business solutions to their customers. I believe that by offering TalkSwitch products, they’re solidifying that dedication.”

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AND MORE. MY CLIENTS COULDN’T BE HAPPIER.”**

When it comes to his customers, MacMartin says he’s happy to help them get the most efficient technology on the market for the right price.

“TalkSwitch is a very affordable communications solution,” he says. “The majority of the time, my customers simply need a phone system that will handle all of their calls with ease, handle their voicemail, play music on hold, and those kinds of basic things a phone system should do. But sometimes I get feedback from clients saying, ‘It’s a great system. I can transfer all of my calls from my office to my cell phone so I never miss a call!’” MacMartin says. “TalkSwitch does everything you want it to do, and more. My clients couldn’t be happier.”

It is a similar story in the Portland, Oregon Concerto Networks franchise. Bringing over 15 years of Information Technology experience to the table, Portland franchise operator Nathan O’Bryan has been personally using and providing TalkSwitch units to his clients since early 2007.

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“I spent the majority of my IT career working with large corporations,” says O’Bryan. “I was at the point when I wanted to become more independent and work for myself, and becoming a part of the Concerto Networks team of franchises across the country seemed like the perfect fit.”

TalkSwitch telephone systems were another perfect fit for O’Bryan.

“I thought TalkSwitch was a cool idea, especially for small businesses,” O’Bryan explains. “I have no experience with phone systems, and I’ve been able to use it very effectively, and now, I bring TalkSwitch products to the table when configuring the proper infrastructure for my clients.”

Staying true to the vision of Concerto Networks founder Ray Hivoral, O’Bryan’s franchise focuses on small commercial businesses with less than 20 staff members who place their trust in an outsourced IT professional to provide them with the right tools to do their job effectively.

“I WAS ACTUALLY GIVEN A REFERRAL FROM THE TALKSWITCH TECHNICAL SUPPORT TEAM, AND THAT’S SOMETHING I REALLY APPRECIATE ABOUT THIS RELATIONSHIP. I KNOW TALKSWITCH WILL ALWAYS BE THERE TO HELP ME SELL MY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.”

“My clients represent the definition of small business,” O’Bryan explains. “By offering them TalkSwitch phone systems, it gives them the larger, more professional image they were looking for. They’re extremely happy with the product and all of the wonderful features it comes with. They cut the cost of a full-time receptionist with their auto attendant, stay connected to their office at all times through remote extensions, and can check their office voicemail from anywhere. And with such a reasonably priced phone system, who wouldn’t want a TalkSwitch for their small business?”

With the overall support from both Concerto Networks and TalkSwitch, customers are always well taken care of. If a customer has an issue with their TalkSwitch, a technical support helpline is available. When it comes to system maintenance, customers can rest assured they will be tended to immediately by the professionals on the ground at Concerto Networks and its network of franchise operators.

“I was actually given a referral from the TalkSwitch technical support team, and that’s something I really appreciate about this relationship,” O’Bryan says. “It’s built on a solid foundation from sales to marketing to technical support, and that benefits small businesses everywhere. I know TalkSwitch will always be there to help me sell my products and services.”

Gary Gray is another strong supporter of TalkSwitch. A former United States Navy sonar technician, and IT systems manager for numerous software start-ups in Silicon Valley, Gray is in his element as the owner and operator of the Concerto Networks franchise in Houston, Texas. Bringing over 25 years of IT experience, Gray joined Concerto Networks in September 2005 to provide his expertise in business solutions for small businesses while expanding Concerto Networks’ market share in the largest city in the Lone Star State.

“Prior to the TalkSwitch/Concerto partnership, I had installed a TalkSwitch phone system for a client of mine,” Gray explains. “I was able to install and set up a TalkSwitch with no previous experience. The customer loves it. It does everything he wanted it to do. He thinks I’m a genius. That single experience gives me the confidence to offer the TalkSwitch solution to prospects and current customers knowing it is capable of meeting their needs, and I can support it.”

Since his first TalkSwitch installation experience, Gray feels comfortable offering TalkSwitch to his small business customers instead of suggesting alternative solutions from enterprise-level providers like Avaya.

“TalkSwitch is a great product, and offers better advantages for small business than Avaya’s phone solutions,” says Gray. “My customers want effective business solutions that fit their budgets, and require little to no maintenance. With TalkSwitch, you get an inexpensive phone system solution that is easily configurable and the customer gets exactly what they want.”

About Concerto Networks®

With over 50 franchises in the United States and overseas in the UK, Spain, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, Concerto Networks, Inc., is an international computer and Information Technology (IT) franchise business providing professional, consistent-quality business technology solutions to small- and medium-sized businesses, serving a critical function for this rapidly growing market. Creating the Simple Office®, Concerto Networks® allows their clients to focus on their business and not their technology worries. For more information, call 1.866.IT.CONCERTO or visit: www.concertonetworks.com.

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About TalkSwitch

TalkSwitch® designs and develops award-winning phone systems for small, multi-location and franchise businesses. Since its establishment in 1990, TalkSwitch has dedicated itself to developing PBXs and IP PBXs that tens of thousands of small businesses across North America rely on. With a growing global network of resellers, distributors and partners, TalkSwitch phones and phone systems are changing the way small businesses communicate. For more information, please visit our website at www.talkswitch.com, or call us toll free in North America at 1.888.332.9322. In all other markets call +1.613.725.2980.

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