Esna Technologies develops cost-effective, high-quality voice processing solutions using Brooktrout Technology products

"Press '2' to leave a message…"

Voice Messaging

When voice processing was in its infancy in the early 1990s, organizations essentially could choose from two types of systems. The first was a number of high-end, high-quality voice mail systems. Although these only offered what today would be considered basic services, such as automated attendant and messaging, the systems were relatively reliable and could be integrated with a business' existing phone system. Unfortunately, these high-end systems were very expensive—priced out of the reach of most small to medium-sized companies.

The other alternative was a growing array of inexpensive, low-end voice mail systems. Although these systems were affordable for many smaller organizations, they did not integrate well with phone systems and seldom performed consistently or reliably.

In 1992, Esna Technologies, Inc., a privately owned company based in Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada, entered the market with a line of innovative, PC-based voice processing solutions. Esna Tech's systems provide the features and functionality traditionally reserved for high-end voice processing products, but at a price that is cost-effective for small to medium-sized organizations.

Further, unlike closed-architecture systems which were designed to integrate with a single phone system, Esna Tech's voice processing solutions work with a wide range of PBXs and handle a broad cross section of languages for global applications. In addition, they are priced at less than half the starting cost of leading high-end voice processing solutions.

From the very beginning, a key component of Esna Tech's revolutionary voice mail approach has been computer telephony (CT) products, such as the Vantage™ and Prelude™ Series voice processings cards supplied by Brooktrout Technology. "We were one of the first to adopt the Brooktrout Technology CT voice platform," says Davide Petramala, vice president of business development for Esna Technologies. "Brooktrout Technology's boards serve as a quality engine that enables our systems to work seamlessly with different PBXs at a very high level. This was the key to our being able to offer full-featured, fully integrated solutions for thousands of dollars less than comparable high-end systems."

Open, Flexible Platform

Esna Tech's voice processing solutions are based on an open, highly flexible platform that can be used with most PBX and key systems, as well as with many leading PC operating systems such as Microsoft Windows® 95 and Microsoft Windows NT®, Novell® NetWare®, LANtastic®, and OS/2.

"The businesses we target are fast growing companies that need the efficiency and productivity advantages of voice messaging to compete," remarks Petramala. "But it is precisely because of their rapid growth that they can't be locked into a proprietary system that won't readily adapt to change."

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Esna Tech's voice mail systems can expand from 2 to 64 ports, simply by adding additional voice processing cards. This means that even the smallest companies can start with an Esna Tech solution, and continue getting a return from their investment as they grow to 500 or more employees.

The open architecture also makes it easy to expand storage capacity or add mailboxes. Esna Tech's systems use standard PC hard drives, which users can purchase and install as additional storage is required.

"Brooktrout Technology's Vantage™ Series voice processing cards are the main hardware component in our voice mail systems," Petramala explains. "They provide the necessary link to a customer's PBX, as well as powerful transfer, playback and voice compression capabilities. In addition, the cards support a set of drivers and utilities needed to develop feature-rich applications."

Vantage Series voice processing cards offer a wide array of benefits to Esna Tech's customers. The solid-state design ensures high-quality operation, including superior DTMF (dual tone multi frequency) detection—critical for touchtone voice mail applications. Vantage Series cards also provide flexible speed and volume control for outstanding recording and playback. In addition, a suite of advanced utilities, part of Brooktrout Technology's components, facilitate the tight integration of Esna Tech's systems with end-user phone systems, providing exceptional manageability.

"For example, Brooktrout Technology's AccuCall Wizard™ allows us to integrate our systems with most PBXs," Petramala notes. "Another utility called Prompt Studio™ provides a simplified way to edit and organize voice prompts. This allows the easy customization that helps us succeed in the international market. In addition, the Prompt Studio utility streamlines troubleshooting of problems using sophisticated frequency-profiling tools."

Future Application Support

Today, Esna Tech's powerful voice processing solutions effectively integrate a broad spectrum of features into a single package. These can include voice messaging, automated attendant, audiotext, fax processing, and even sophisticated GroupWare integration for Microsoft Exchange®, Lotus Notes and Novell Groupwise. Further, as the market moves toward unified messaging—the next big wave in telecommunications—Esna Tech's customers will remain on the leading edge in embracing this technology.

Unified messaging allows users to send voice mail, email and faxes to a single digital phone number or mailbox—reducing costs and enhancing convenience by eliminating the need to carry multiple devices such as pagers, cell phones and palmtop computers. Because Esna Tech solutions have always run on the same core hardware, users will be able to upgrade from low-end voice mail systems to more powerful platforms for a fraction of the cost of a new system.

"Because our systems use the same boards, all customers need to do to upgrade from a DOS based solution to Windows® 95 or a Windows NT® Server is to change software drivers and add extra memory," declares Petramala. "So any business can take full advantage of unified messaging without scrapping its original investment. Brooktrout Technology's drivers have also saved us time as developers, because code doesn't need to be rewritten for each operating system."

Real World Solutions

The merging of Esna Tech's innovative voice processing expertise with Brooktrout Technology's CT voice products has proven to be a winning combination in a rapidly changing world. Users are able to automate the entire telephone sales and service process, handling calls differently based on who is calling or whom they are trying to reach. Esna Tech's systems can be reconfigured quickly to accommodate changing needs and business conditions.

"Our customers are very happy with products built on the flexible Brooktrout Technology platform," remarks Petramala. "They love the unsurpassed audio quality, wide selection of features and seamless integration with most phone systems. Because so many of our customers are in a growth phase, they appreciate the way the open architecture helps protect their investment."

Esna Tech is also pleased with the close relationship it has built with Brooktrout Technology. "Besides supplying a great product, Brooktrout Technology provides excellent support," Petramala notes. "They are very responsive to our needs and deliver timely follow-up on any issue that needs resolution."

Brooktrout Technology looks forward to continuing to work with Esna Tech as it brings its advanced voice processing products to more customers around the globe.

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