



When the John Deere facility in Augusta was planning to expand their local operation, nearly doubling their size, they were introduced to 3Com's NBX Communications System. Because they were building a new factory that would require cabling for Voice and Data access, and because they would be hiring new employees and moving existing employees to new locations within the plant, the NBX seemed the perfect solution.

At that time, Metropark found out that John Deere was planning on using a traditional PBX-based phone system, which would have required two different cabling infrastructures in the new factory—one for telephones, the other for computers. This is where the NBX first presented itself as an advantage to their existing system. Unlike traditional telephone systems, the NBX delivers voice communications over an Ethernet LAN, not over a separate PBX telephone connection. Therefore, you only need one Data Cabling infrastructure for both Voice and Data traffic.

The front-end savings were obvious: by eliminating the need for a separate cabling system for Voice communications, John Deere would save money on the initial cable installation. Even more significant were the long-term savings associated with maintenance and administration. Because the NBX is managed from a web-browser and does not require additional hardware, it allows for simpler, easier management than traditional systems. Administrators can easily handle moves, adds and changes for any user, anywhere on the network, without relying on the expertise of Metropark's NBX HelpDesk for simple programming adjustments. Given that they were about to double their size, these potential savings were important.

In addition to the new factory being built, John Deere also needed a Voice and Data solution for one of their construction trailers. Set apart from the rest of the plant, it allowed no access to the existing cabling infrastructure. Again, the NBX offered a solution. By providing wireless LAN access, they were able to connect both the NBX telephones and the PCs in the construction trailer to the rest of John Deere's network, providing them seamless functionality at a minimal cost.

While the cost savings and increased management efficiency were important to the IT team at John Deere, their primary concerns were with the reliability and functionality offered by the system. They wanted to be sure they would not be sacrificing quality in their switch to an Ethernet-based communications system. Though still a relatively new technology, the NBX has been shipping for nearly 4 years and has a reliability rating similar to the traditional phone systems (if your computer network goes down, for instance, your phone lines remain unaffected because they run off of an independent chassis). In addition, the ease of management has actually been shown to decrease downtime, as any moves, adds and changes can be accomplished quickly by internal staff. In essence, it was clear that John Deere would not be sacrificing quality for enhanced services.

When compared with their existing system, the NBX also proved to have an advanced selection of features. Like traditional phone systems, it offers features like voice mail, automated attendant, off-site notification, delayed ringing, and Call Detail Reporting. Unlike traditional phone systems, these features are not luxury items available at an additional cost, but are built in to every NBX system sold. And most importantly, the NBX allows the users at John Deere such benefits of convergence as unified voice and email messaging and on-screen dialing.

Phase I of this implementation has been completed, having installed the NBX system in the new factory and tied it to the traditional PBX system already in place via a T-1 line. In the testing phase they have also successfully connected the Augusta plant to their site in Moline, Illinois via John Deere's Wide Area Network (this would eliminate long distance charges between the various sites). With Phase II of the project, John Deere will take the NBX system factory-wide, while phasing out the old PBX system in the Augusta facility entirely since the 3Com Superstack 3 NBX can support up to 1500 devices.

John Deere of Latin America is also receiving the benefits of the NBX as it continues to purchase NBX Technology from Metropark.