

Case Study:

Communications Server System Design

Situation

In 1992 Evergreen Systems was losing market share for its communications server products just as laptops were beginning to see widespread use. People who were traveling expected to be able to dial in to their offices and use the office computer networks just as if they were in the office. The market was demanding elimination of differences between dial in sessions and in-office use of normal desktop computers. To stay in the remote access market Evergreen needed to offer a new server product which was literally made from the same core components as typical desktop computers.

Assignment

As President I took direct responsibility for successful development of the critically needed new product.

Actions

- ✓ Selected Intel's new ATX hardware specification as the most compatible and long lasting to be the center of the new product.
- ✓ Conceived a design to enable fitting many dial in computer modules into the limited equipment space in typical business offices.
- ✓ Applied automation techniques so that each computer module would reset itself to be ready for the next session.
- ✓ Provided a built in, dedicated communication method so the computer modules automatically informed the management process of current status and activity.
- ✓ Developed special power switching techniques to allow dial in computer modules to be removed and replaced while the overall system power was still on so that a dial in user would not be cut off if there were difficulties with another user.
- ✓ Coordinated software development staff and automation firmware to provide web-based, low-level management capability.

Results

The new system enjoyed high customer satisfaction and was completely compatible with regular desktop computers. For five years Evergreen Systems successfully marketed the product line realizing multi-million dollar annual sales until the design itself was sold for more than \$1,000,000 to Data General in 1998.