

# Timing is everything

*With a field service-ERP solution from Evron,  
Tel-e Connect's future is now*



Rapid growth can transform a company, sometimes overnight, and radically change its information technology requirements.

When it happened at Tel-e Connect Systems Ltd. (TCS), a Toronto-based telecom systems distribution and field service organization, the company was convinced of one thing: The tailor-made system it had been nurturing for years had no place in its future.

"We were at a point where the old system was holding us back," says Mary DiGioia, Tel-e Connect's Vice President of Finance. "We couldn't be the company we wanted to be. We needed the flexibility to pursue new initiatives, the scalability to accommodate growth."

It was time for TCS to join the big leagues, and implement an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system that would fully support its business processes and prospects.

Tel-e Connect selected a field-service/ERP solution developed by IBM Advanced Business Partner Evron Computer Systems Corp. of Toronto. The Evron Service Package (ESP) product tightly integrates eBackOffice and eFrontOffice/Clientele modules from award-winning ERP vendor Epicor Software Corp. with Evron's own field service module, all running on IBM @server xSeries.

"The Evron-IBM solution is helping us be the company we need to be," says Ms. DiGioia. "It gives us the flexibility to try new things and, basically, to turn on a dime."

TCS is the largest Nortel distributor in Canada, with some 25,000 customers on its books. It has seen revenue growth in the 25-to-35-percent range in each of the past four years. The company has added dozens of employees during this period and now has more than 100. In June 2002, it took on a new role, as one of three master distributors for Nortel in Canada. It now sells primarily to other dealers.

"That was a huge opportunity for us," Ms. DiGioia says of the Nortel master distributorship. "And it's something we could not have done easily with our old system."



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### **Evron's IBM-based integrated solution delivers information, instantly**

TCS' old system had become as unreliable as it was familiar. Its various modules were poorly integrated. Sales people, for example, would not know if an existing customer they were calling on had an open service call that might influence buying decisions. And Ms. DiGioia couldn't do something as simple as check on sales by account rep.

The old system required programming in query language to extract reports from the data. It used a flat file database system making it impossible to search records easily. Only a handful of people in the firm knew how to use it really well. And developing reports for new business ventures was a major undertaking.

Worse, it allowed employees to take shortcuts and not log all customer information – who the correct contacts were, who called whom when. “And you can only get out of something what you put into it,” notes Ms. DiGioia. Often, valuable company information sat on personal laptops that were not connected to anything and never backed up.

### **Time for change**

It was the firm's own success that finally pushed it to look for something better. Entrepreneur David Tavares, TCS's president, formed the company in the early 1980s right after regulatory changes ended the monopoly Canadian phone companies had on selling private branch exchanges (PBXs) to businesses.

“David Tavares saw the way his business was growing in recent years and realized that to move to the next level, it required a lot of things it didn't have before, including a better IT solution” explains Paul Belzycki, Evron's Vice-President of Sales.

The decision was made only after careful consideration of other software options. In the end, only Evron, an Epicor Solution Provider,

could offer an affordable system that included a transparently integrated field service module. “Others said they had it, but it turned out they didn't,” Ms. DiGioia says.

### **IBM the better choice**

For hardware, TCS initially leaned towards Dell, but Evron convinced the company that IBM was a much better choice.

“Right now in the server space, IBM's technology surpasses anybody's,” says Mr. Belzycki. “Nobody can beat them on speed, reliability, value. And they have a service organization that is second to none.”

IBM Business Partner	Evron
Services:	Infrastructure, Installation, Maintenance and Networking Services
Territory	Greater Toronto Area
Customer Industry	Telecommunication and Maintenance Services

The TCS team did not need a lot of convincing, after looking at Dell, IBM and Compaq. They liked the physical design of the IBM servers better and found the utilities – especially Director, IBM's network management software – more useful and “business-like,” says Project Manager Bill Hurrell.

Then too, the company's limited experience with IBM to that point – it owned some six-year-old ThinkPad laptops – confirmed what Evron was telling it about IBM's superior reliability. “Those ThinkPads had lasted amazingly well!” Mr. Hurrell says.

Thanks to the implementation of the Evron solution, TCS is now outfitted to run its business better – with better access to information, better service in the field, better capacity for change.

### **Information at finger-tips**

With the company's increased volume of business and enlarged staff, it was essential that complete information about customers be instantly available. With the new system, it is. Everyone who touches it must input information. All the data sits on one server, accessible to all.

Anyone can handle a customer query and see a complete account history instantly. Best of all, with its slick Windows interface, the software makes it easy for anyone, even non-technical employees, to generate customized reports.

### **Better field service**

The system also addresses crucial field issues. For the first time TCS has a serial number tracking system to help ensure it only services equipment it sold and equipment still under warranty.

The new system is infinitely more reliable. It enhances productivity and customer service, vastly improves financial and marketing reporting and, more importantly, it has generally raised spirits in the company.

### **A new direction**

“We have state-of-the-art equipment now,” notes Ms. DiGioia. “And that improves morale. It makes people feel the company has taken a new direction, which it has.”

TCS today is a bigger company, yet paradoxically a nimbler, more flexible, more opportunistic company. Thanks to the ESP system from Evron, TCS can now change when it needs to change, and grab its chances when it sees them.

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