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### **Pohlad Companies Acquires Avtex to Expand Unified Communications Offerings**

**By Susan J. Campbell, TMCnet Contributing Editor**

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In a deal that closed today without revealing terms, the Pohlad family of companies has expanded its information technology (IT) holdings for the third time in two years with the addition of Avtex, a unified communications solutions provider based in Minneapolis.

Avtex designs, installs and supports technology needed for call centers and customer contact centers, as well as IP telephony systems and other messaging applications for businesses.

The company has enjoyed rapid growth through the provision of premise-based and hosted unified communications solutions that bring together telephone, e-mail, text messaging and call centers into a single, highly secure customer contact system that transcends traditional phone and data systems.

With this acquisition, Avtex will operate as a separate company, retaining its current headquarters location and all of its 100 employees, including its senior management team.

Over the past ten years, Avtex has acquired five companies to expand its services and geographic reach. Most recently, it acquired Perimeter Technology of Georgia, expanding its southeast operations.

"We think Avtex is a great fit, since they have both a strong management team and excellent growth potential," said Dave Johnson, chief technology officer for the Pohlad family of companies, in a Monday statement.

"We've been successful growing to this point as a standalone entity, but to take the next leap, we need a partner like the Pohlad organization," said Bob Denman, Avtex president, in Monday's statement.

"It's a nice match for us, at the right time, given our shared interest in capitalizing on the significant marketplace opportunities we seek to increase service offerings and geographic reach. It's also great news for our customers and employees, who will both benefit from this move."

According to Johnson, the acquisition of Avtex fits with an important marketplace trend. "Unified communications is the fastest-growing segment of the IT industry because it brings together all of the forms of communications that were separate in the past. It's a very exciting business for us to be in," he said.

This acquisition is also considered by Pohlad to be the culmination of its pursued strategy in the managed services IT arena. In 2006, the company acquired Inetium, a firm focused on improving business productivity through IT strategy, solutions and services; and in 2007, it acquired Arcadia Solutions, a consulting firm specializing in the deployment,

benchmarking and optimization of emerging technologies in the health care, financial services and high technology industries.

"We can start to provide IT solutions across all three companies. Arcadia does the high level analytics that help companies understand their customers. Inetium does the installation of customer relationship management and workforce automation systems," Johnson said.

"And now Avtex provides the underlying communications platform and application expertise to bring it all together."

With this acquisition, the Pohlad companies will be well positioned to advance its strategic initiatives in the IT industry. The organization has done well to focus on the needs of the industry today, while also building its portfolio to anticipate market trends and demands of tomorrow.

*Susan J. Campbell is a contributing editor for TMC and has also written for eastbiz.com.*