

Acme Packet E-SBC secures world's largest on-line travel reservation center

case study

Executive summary

To keep pace with skyrocketing business growth, Ctrip.com—China's premier travel site—deployed a 24-hour global SIP contact center. The company implemented an end-to-end IP infrastructure, including a SIP trunking service, to reduce telephony expenses and improve business agility.

Ctrip chose Acme Packet to accelerate the integration of their SIP trunking service and to protect and control their SIP trunking borders. Specifically designed to overcome the security, interoperability and service quality challenges businesses often encounter when implementing end-to-end IP communications networks, Acme Packet E-SBCs enable Ctrip to enjoy all the benefits of a SIP contact center without sacrificing service integrity or customer satisfaction.

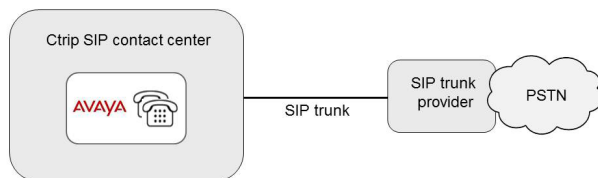
Customer environment

In May 2010, Ctrip opened a state-of-the-art SIP contact center in Nantong, Jiangsu province to support its rapidly expanding business. With plans to accommodate 12,000 agents, the new facility is believed to be the largest travel reservation center in the world. The company implemented an Avaya Aura™ SIP contact center solution as the foundation for the new reservation center and selected Jiangsu Unicom as their SIP trunk service provider.

With a SIP contact center, Ctrip is able to boost agent productivity and improve customer service while minimizing telecommunications expenses. SIP trunking plays a key role in containing telephony costs and enabling rapid growth. By utilizing a SIP trunking service in combination with an end-to-end IP network, Ctrip is able to reduce PSTN origination and termination charges, eliminate costly PSTN "take back and transfer" fees and improve service agility.

Customer background

As China's leading travel service company, Ctrip.com International Ltd. provides over 50 million registered members with comprehensive services including hotel reservations, flight ticketing, packaged tours and corporate travel management. Ctrip's hotel reservation network includes over 32,000 hotels worldwide, making it the largest in China. Over two million room nights are booked through Ctrip every month. Their business is expanding at an extraordinary pace, growing at an average annual rate of 40 percent.



Business challenge

Interfacing with a SIP trunking service can be a challenge. Businesses often encounter interoperability, service quality and security issues which can hinder deployment and lead to poor customer experiences, service outages and financial loss. Conventional IP networking products such as firewalls, routers and gateways weren't conceived with interactive IP communications in mind and leave SIP contact centers vulnerable to security threats and VoIP quality issues. Ctrip sought an Enterprise Session Border Controller (E-SBC) to mitigate SIP trunking interoperability issues, protect their private IP network and ensure service quality.

Acme Packet session border controller solutions

Ctrip selected Acme Packet E-SBCs upon the advice of their system integrator Wilcom Information Technology. An Avaya DevConnect partner, Wilcom is well-versed in Avaya solutions and guidelines.

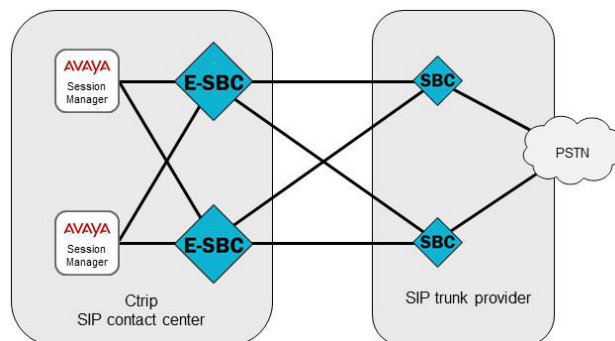
Avaya recommends the use of Acme Packet SBCs for SIP security, service interworking and service quality assurance functions. As an Avaya DevConnect platinum partner Acme Packet has completed extensive integration testing with Avaya Aura and has special access to Avaya engineers, product data and other technical resources.

Acme Packet E-SBCs accelerate the implementation of SIP trunking services and address critical IP communications security, interoperability and reliability challenges. Key functions include the following:

- **Strong security** – Acme Packet E-SBCs protect and control interactive IP communications infrastructure, services and applications, ensuring confidentiality, integrity and availability. They prevent fraud and service theft, and guard against malicious attacks and non-malicious incidents such as system overloads and Internet telephony spam.
- **Easy interoperability** – SIP specifications are less rigid than ITU telecom specifications for conventional ISDN PRI trunks. SIP implementation variances can lead to vendor incompatibilities and interoperability issues. Acme Packet E-SBCs mitigate multi-vendor interoperability issues contact centers often face when interfacing with SIP trunking services.
- **Assured reliability** – Acme Packet E-SBCs help deliver PSTN-like availability and service quality for SIP trunks. They enforce QoS, balance loads across trunks, and reroute sessions around interface failures to optimize network performance, circumvent equipment and facility problems and ensure business continuity.

Deployment model

Ctrip deployed two Acme Packet Net-Net E-SBCs in their Nantong City data center. The E-SBCs serve as the termination point for the SIP trunking service, protecting and controlling the SIP trunking border. The company installed a high availability (HA) configuration with redundant E-SBCs and redundant trunks to enable continued operation in the event of equipment or trunk failures. Ctrip makes use of Acme Packet's comprehensive security features to defend against security threats and vulnerabilities and utilizes Acme Packet's extensive SIP normalization capabilities to eliminate SIP trunking service interoperability issues.



Fully-redundant configuration ensures high availability

“Acme Packet’s session border controller solution is critical in helping us achieve our goal to provide excellent customer service while ensuring network security. By enabling us to migrate from our legacy call center infrastructure and launch contact centers leveraging an end-to-end IP communications infrastructure, the Acme Packet implementation has helped us to achieve our customer service goals while dramatically reducing costs.”

Chen Min
General Manager of the Ctrip Research Center

Results

Acme Packet E-SBCs let Ctrip reap all the benefits of a SIP contact center without sacrificing security or reliability. By leveraging Acme Packet E-SBCs and a SIP trunking service, Ctrip is able to deliver superior customer experiences while reducing telecommunications cost and complexity. Key benefits include the following:

- **Lower telephony expenses** – Ctrip enjoys significantly lower PSTN origination and termination fees with a SIP trunking service. In addition, Ctrip uses the end-to-end IP network to avoid expensive service provider take back and transfer fees by transferring calls directly over their private IP network.
- **High availability** – Configured to provide hitless and stateful failover for SIP signaling and media sessions, ensuring continued operation in the event of equipment or trunk failures. High availability operation is critical for maintaining outstanding customer service and avoiding financial loss.
- **Risk mitigation** – Acme Packet’s rich security capabilities protect Ctrip’s IT assets and ensure service integrity by defending against a wide array of security threats. With Acme Packet, Ctrip is able to take advantage of SIP trunking without increasing risk.
- **Rapid deployment** – Acme Packet E-SBCs helped Ctrip avoid compatibility issues which often hamper the roll out of SIP trunking services. The solution streamlined service deployment by overcoming common service interworking and interoperability challenges. The E-SBCs were installed, configured, thoroughly tested and deemed fully operational with the SIP trunking service in about a week.



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