

### FORTY WINKS (& \$90,000)



While on assignment for Wink Communications, an interactive television service available on all Direct TV systems, TAOS consultant Scott Stone realized that internal employees were using an antiquated bank of eight analog modems to access their e-mail remotely, via 800 numbers that were costing the company a fortune. He suggested using a spare Cisco access server (originally purchased for a separate project) to establish a virtual private network (VPN) instead, along with a more secure PIX firewall and AT&T Worldnet dial-up accounts that cost only \$20 a month.

Scott's client manager was initially interested in this more economical solution, as were the VP of Operations, the CFO, and the CEO, especially after learning that the Cisco PIX520 firewall, a \$15,000 investment, would pay for itself quickly with the savings gained from the much-curtailed usage of 800 numbers.

Wink Communications's Director of IT Patrick Wheeler estimates that Scott's VPN solution saves his company \$90,000 a year in dial-up costs. "Wink was spending more than \$250 per day," remembers Wheeler. "Since the VPN installation and network redesign we have cut our dial-up costs dramatically, while providing enhanced functionality to our remote sales force, allowing them to focus on their core priorities — sales."

Although Scott is no longer on assignment with Wink, the new system is still in place. "This was not a 'make-do' remedy for the old dial-up solution," Scott says. "This is a system that can scale to many times its current size, and do so while maintaining performance and security. The firewall has no set limit on the number of VPN clients, and the PIX firewall is capable of 250,000 simultaneous connections. There are no additional phone lines to buy, nor additional modems, because the connections all occur via the Internet." Thus the cost savings achieved during Scott's tenure remain constant, and the solution itself shall withstand substantial growth.