

Customer communication:



A two-way street

Today, enterprises worldwide face two important concerns: business continuity

and budget pressure. Amid economic uncertainty, enterprises want to accomplish more with less money. They want to consolidate server and storage expenses, and protect their critical data from any kind of disaster. How do we know? Our customers tell us.

The Dell™ direct model not only lowers the cost of computing for enterprises, but it also gives Dell its most important asset: an instant communication link with customers. Each day, we talk to enterprise customers in person, by phone, or by e-mail about their biggest business concerns. Our goal is to listen and understand their problems so we can continue to provide the most effective solutions.

Forging a path toward shared information

In addition to daily contact with Dell representatives, customers can ask questions and provide suggestions through several forums. For example, Dell has a customer advisory council specifically focused on input from corporate, education, health care, and small business customers. We retrieve this feedback in small, intimate groups so we can get to the heart of the problems they are trying to solve, and how they feel Dell can help.

In addition, we have a Platinum Council that brings together global and corporate customers twice annually with the top levels of our company, including Dell CEO and founder Michael Dell. We typically spend a couple of days together to better understand how Dell can improve its servers, storage, software, and services to better suit customers' high-end IT needs.

Our technology summits are another forum for communication with businesses. At these larger events, technologists from large and small customers review Dell product roadmaps and speak with Dell engineers about the product innovations they

would like to see. These summits are an effective way to hear the word on the street and share with customers our own experiences and best practices.

Furthermore, Dell also publishes *Dell Power Solutions*, a quarterly magazine aimed at a technical audience. The feedback we receive from *Power Solutions* readers tells us what's working on the front lines of enterprise computing. Through *Power Solutions*, we also share stories from our customers about the problems they have solved using Dell technology. In fact, this special issue of *Power Solutions* brings together many of the valuable experiences and best practices of Dell customers. These case studies can help customers better evaluate new technologies and find real-world solutions implemented in environments similar to their own.

Customer focus: The road to success

At Dell, maintaining a customer focus is a key tenet in everything we do, and this approach has generated many positive results—especially for the Dell Product Group. Many of our customers are configuring standards-based Dell servers in clusters so they can execute the high-end computing tasks traditionally performed by mainframes. On average, we find that Dell standards-based server clusters save customers more than 60 percent, compared with the cost of proprietary systems.¹

How do we plan to continue that growth? By traveling the road that got us here: Through continued sharing and careful listening.

Linda Hargrove-York
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Dell Product Group

¹ Dell Second Quarter Earnings Announcement, August 15, 2002.