



Red River
COMMUNICATIONS

The logo for Red River Communications is mounted on a wall in an office. It features the words "Red River" in a large, bold, sans-serif font, with a red swoosh graphic connecting the two words. Below this, the word "COMMUNICATIONS" is written in a smaller, red, all-caps sans-serif font. The entire logo is illuminated by three track lights mounted on the ceiling above it.

Just the Ticket for Improved Ticketing
How Red River Communications Gained Efficiency Via Integrated Systems



Contents

I

Choosing integration

II

The road to better systems

III

Efficiency and customer
experience results

IV

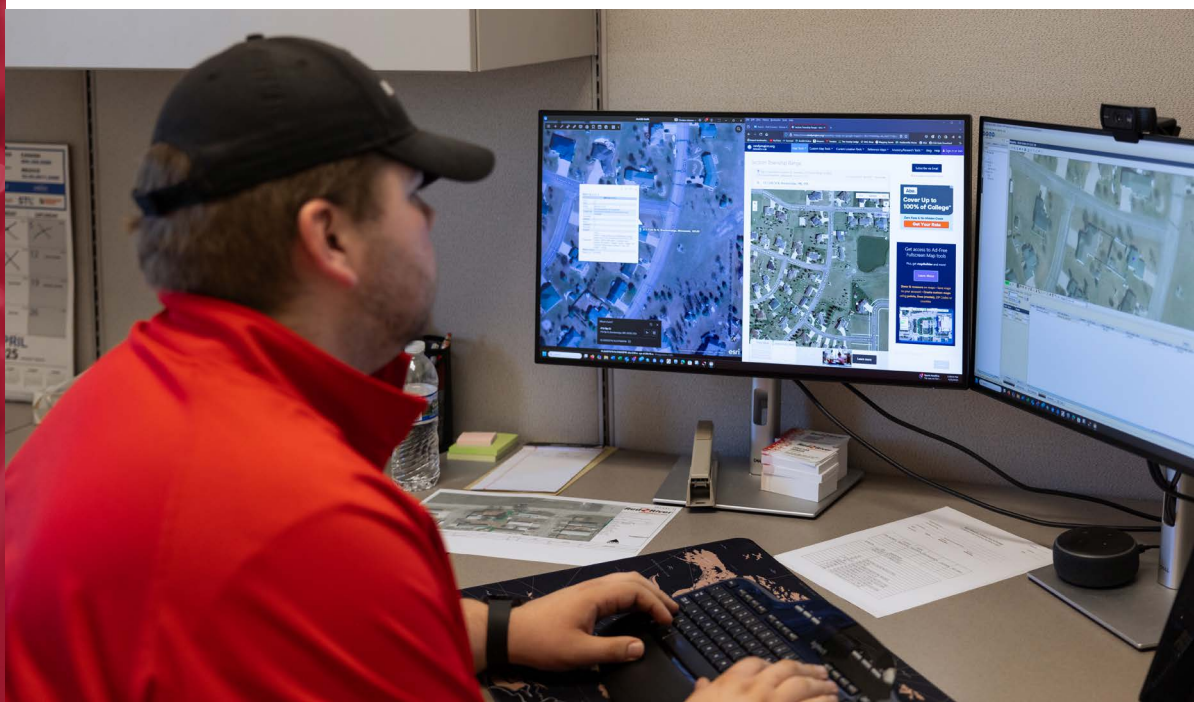
Summary: Tips for a
successful integration

About

When a customer calls you, does your customer service and support staff know who they are, what service they have, what equipment they're using, and other key details? Can a single employee help solve a customer's problem with infrequent need for escalation? Can a single employee set up a new customer's service, from installation to invoicing?



Integrating internal systems can be complex, but the rewards you reap are worth the effort.

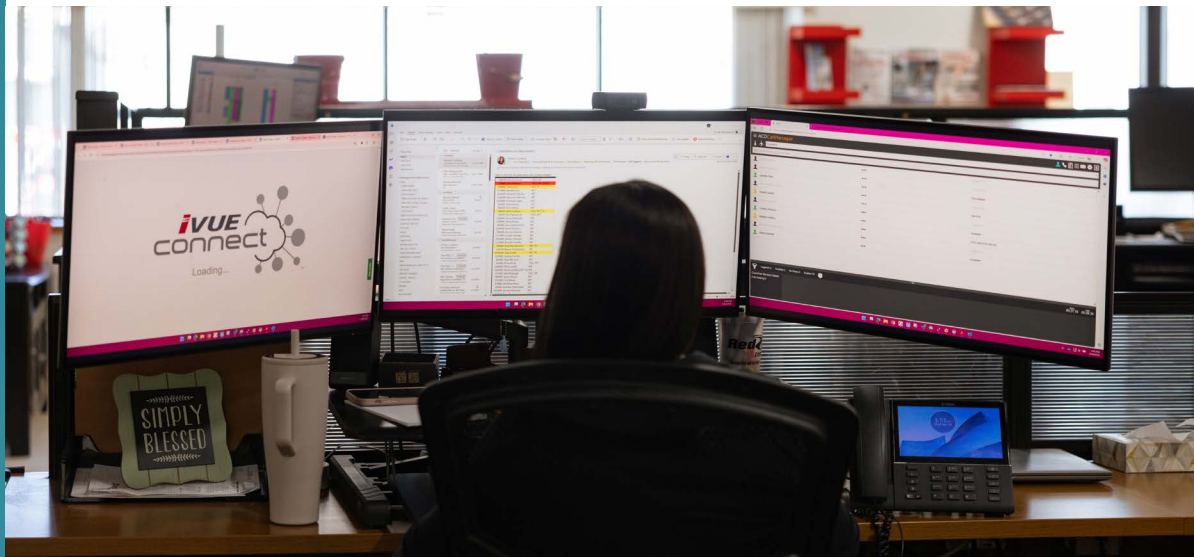


This white paper explores the case study of one provider—Red River Communications, a broadband provider serving communities in North Dakota and Minnesota—that took the time and effort needed to integrate their customer service management software and ticketing system with their externally managed customer service provider for the sake of gaining internal efficiencies and improving their customer experience.

1 Choosing integration

Red River Communications operated for years on NISC's iVUE Service software solution, which worked well for them but did not offer as many tools as the new, cloud-based solution, iVUE Connect-Service.

There were internal conversations at Red River Communications for years about a possible switch to iVUE Connect. When Tom Steinolfson became CEO a few years ago, he became an important advocate for the switch. In addition to its enhanced features, iVUE Connect would still allow Red River Communications to integrate their NISC software with ISPN Network Services' HelpDesk services, which they use to provide managed 24/7 support to their customers.



Once the decision to switch to iVUE Connect was made, the work began. The Red River Communications team says it was primarily their customer service and network departments that were responsible for ensuring the accuracy and integrity of their data, including things like inventory, plant records, and customer information. These teams also worked with NISC to implement the integration with ISPN, test the software, and make the go-live successful.



The road to better systems

Why make the switch? Integrating iVUE Connect with ISPN allowed Red River Communications to gain efficiency and improve their customer experience. This was possible through application programming interface (API) tools, the creation of business rules, and an improved user interface:

1. **API tools.** Because ISPN offered an API with the NISC legacy system, Red River Communications understood the power of API tools. Working with NISC and ISPN to develop an iVUE Connect API would offer more possibilities for integration than software without API tools. The iVUE Connect APIs would allow ISPN's HelpDesk agents to access customer information far faster than they could in the past. The Red River Communications Network Operations Center is integrated, via API, with their internal systems so they don't have to create new customer records—they are created automatically overnight. Successfully integrated APIs require time to set up and test, but once they're in place they are an invaluable asset toward the creation of more efficient systems.
2. **Business rules.** Red River Communications employed iVUE Connect's ability to add custom business rules—information specific to their company—to improve the usability and efficiency of the software. This means, for instance, that when a customer adds a new service, the charges for that service populate in the customer's record automatically rather than having to be entered each time. Red River Communications says these backend functions make a big difference when they are properly set up.
3. **Improved user interface.** Red River Communications found that the iVUE Connect system offers more user tools and is more intuitive than previous systems. For example, prior to iVUE Connect, a user trying to add a billing code to a record would have to know the exact billing code—among hundreds in the Red River Communications system—or look it up manually. Because iVUE Connect is integrated with Red River Communications' other systems, a simple search allows the billing code to be populated easily. The improved user interface has significant benefits for customer service training.



Efficiency and customer experience results

Now that Red River Communications has successfully integrated iVUE Connect with their ISPN support, they are experiencing increased efficiencies and their customers benefit from a better experience. This is evidenced in multiple areas:

1. **Customer information at a glance.** As described above, the iVUE Connect API tools allow for seamless integration with Red River Communications' customer service teams and their ISPN HelpDesk agents. When a customer calls, less time is spent verifying the customer and figuring out what service they have, what equipment they use, and so on. That information is accessible quickly and effortlessly, so customers can be helped more quickly, they are not asked for information they think customer service representatives (CSRs) should already have, the calls take less time, and the agent is more likely to be able to solve their problem without additional help.
2. **Simplified provisioning.** When customers order new service, or need an upgrade or downgrade, they want it quickly and simply. With iVUE Connect, Red River Communications says they have gained enormous efficiencies in provisioning. Before iVUE Connect, adding a new customer might have involved two or three different staff members. Now, a single outside plant technician can usually handle the installation, provision the Optical Network Terminal, and set up invoicing via the integrated iVUE Connect software.
3. **Easier system, easier training.** Training new CSRs on iVUE Connect is a far simpler process than it was with the legacy system. New CSRs have less to learn under the iVUE Connect system. There is less training around troubleshooting, regulatory fees, internal codes, and so on because those elements are built into the intuitive, user-friendly iVUE Connect interface.
4. **Numbers that speak for themselves.** The results produced by the fully integrated iVUE Connect system are tangible. In a single month after implementation (February 2025), Red River Communications received 55 customer calls after normal business hours. The average wait time for those customers to speak to an agent was only 30 seconds, and the average call duration was 12 minutes. Of those 55 calls, only 11 (20%) had to be escalated to outbound technicians. Red River Communications says the number of escalations was much higher before iVUE Connect was integrated with ISPN.

IV

Summary: Tips for a successful integration

Overall, the Red River Communications team says they spent about three months working out the integration between NISC's iVUE Connect and ISPN. They stressed, though, that as one of the first companies to integrate those systems, they blazed a trail that will be far simpler for other broadband service providers to follow in the future.

The Red River Communications staff says some of the most important elements of a successful integration are ensuring you have the cleanest data possible and having an open, transparent relationship with NISC so they can work alongside you to establish a mutually beneficial partnership from start to finish.





Would your company benefit from integrated systems that optimize your efficiency and improve your customer experience? NISC would love to talk with you. Call them at 866.999.6472 or visit nisc.coop.



866.999.6472



visit www.nisc.coop to learn more

