

## Duet

Minnesota start-up offers straight-forward, cost-effective wireless phone and broadband internet service to local market



### Company

Duet  
St. Cloud, MN  
[www.duetip.com](http://www.duetip.com)

### Overview

Duet was founded in 2009 to offer wireless broad-band internet and phone service to residential and business customers in and around St. Cloud, MN. For many customers in Central Minnesota, it meant greatly improved service and for some, availability of such service for the first time. The company bundles its services in affordable packages, with state-of-the-art wireless technology and a wide selection of phones and peripheral hardware with minimal or no long-term binding contracts.

Though customers must reside or operate within a 30-mile service area, they can make calls to anywhere from anywhere in the U.S. without incurring long distance or roaming charges, due to partnerships with major carriers that extend coverage nationwide.

Duet competes effectively against other companies by providing superior customer service and the latest options in wireless phones and peripherals. Customer service reps live locally and all service calls are handled locally – rather than getting routed through automated call centers half a world away.

**Duet prides itself on seeing a need for wireless broadband internet and mobile phone service in its local market – St. Cloud, MN. And on creating a service model designed to compete head-to-head with major telecommunications carriers.**

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### Challenge

Launching a start-up business is tough enough under the best of circumstances, but doing it in the depth of a recession adds challenges and complexities that are not for the faint of heart. But tough times don't necessarily have to lessen the need or appeal of an enterprise.

Duet started operations in the summer of 2009, and opened its retail store for business around Thanksgiving. It was tailored to fill a need that wasn't being well served by any of the national telecommunications carriers: providing wireless broadband internet and phone service in a localized area where service was non-existent or spotty. In addition, it designed its service packages and terms to be affordable with low risk. It set up the wireless technology infrastructure, the product and service offerings, and the business processes capable of supporting the launch – but also capable of supporting the company's future growth over the long term.

Recognized as key to success from the start was disciplined, diligent financial management and the information systems to support it – both during the launch phase, but also well into the future. If the economic downturn brought any lesson, it was that sound financial management is imperative to survival.

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## Benefits

- Strong General Ledger backbone
- Robust and comprehensive financials
- Flexible reporting and data analysis
- Bulletproof availability and security with hosted solution
- Nightly system backups
- Responsive, reliable system support

## Benefits

- Microsoft Dynamics Great Plains 2010
- Microsoft Excel 2010
- Microsoft Windows 2008
- Microsoft Virtualization
- Microsoft SQL Server 2008
- Microsoft Terminal Services
- Microsoft TSGateway
- Microsoft DPM
- Extend ASP Control Panel

## Solution

“The decision to go with Microsoft Great Plains Financials as a cloud-based, hosted service was already made before I started at Duet,” says, Scott Loesch, accounting manager. “I’d worked with the Great Plains software previously, so I was comfortable with the system – but the solution had resided in-house. I was skeptical of a hosted solution at first. I had initial concerns about connectivity and availability, and security and backup management” – all critical to disciplined financial management.

Great Plains Financials provides comprehensive functionality and the ability to leverage all the system data to help achieve desired business outcomes. A strong General Ledger backbone provides the foundation for accurate, timely data recording and detailed reporting and analysis. This is augmented by an array of feature sets that support Cash Management, Bank Reconciliation, Fixed Assets, Payables, Receivables, and Collection Management, among others.

Loesch’s concerns about a hosted solution were quickly dispelled by the service it received from GoWx, its hosting service provider. GoWx’s business model was very much in sync with Duet’s: keen focus on responsive personal care and support; and consistently fast and reliable system performance.

## Results

“It’s our data, but it and the system reside at the hosting site,” Loesch says. “But we have 100 percent availability, and GoWx does backups nightly. The availability and security have been bulletproof.”

When Loesch previously worked with the Great Plains system, he had in-house accounting and IT staffs to support him. In Duet’s lean operations, he essentially single-handedly constitutes the accounting department, and has one staff person capable of providing special IT assistance. “Duet is my first startup situation, so I wasn’t used to being without staff.” That took some adjustment on his part. But he has come to unequivocally rely on and trust the hosted IT service he receives from GoWx. “I have a lot less to worry about, actually. It allows me to focus solely on the accounting function.” And that enables him to concentrate his expertise and experience on adding greater value to the company’s financial management function.

Bottom line: “GoWx’s hosting of the Great Plains solution has really worked out quite well.”



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