



RollCall Systems, Inc.

***Interview with Victor Kluck, President of RollCall Systems, Inc.***

*Tell me more about your new product, RollCall-Pro for Tablets.*

RollCall-Pro is a 5<sup>th</sup> generation wireless voting system that's based on our 13 years of experience with city councils, county boards, and legislative groups. In short, RollCall-Pro for Tablets is a program that combines handheld devices with a WiFi connection and a PC computer [that runs the Meeting Manager program] to create a wireless voting system.

*How does the voting system work during the meeting?*

The program guides the group through pre-vote discussion and the actual vote. Members use tablets or smartphones to vote on items under consideration via WiFi. The PC-based Meeting Manager program automatically displays outcomes (via projector or monitor) for the public, and it creates an electronic record of the vote outcome.

*With your RollCall Systems products and RollCall-Pro for Tablets in particular, you are focused on the meeting part of the democratic process. Why is that?*

When I first started attending legislative meetings, I was struck by how little information was shared with the audience and how hard it was to hear what was going on. In a typical meeting it's sometimes hard to tell who is speaking, what they're talking about, what happens next and most of all, what just happened – A typical legislative meeting is a “mumble, mumble, gavel, and done”, sort of affair. I remember thinking that these meetings may be technically “open”, but they certainly don't reflect the intent of an open meeting.

*How does your product fulfill the intent of the open meeting concept?*

In a meeting that uses RollCall-Pro, everything is clearly displayed for all to see: what's being voted on, what kind of majority is needed, who has voted, how everyone voted, and whether or not it passed. This is all displayed for everyone to absorb.

*I can see how these meetings would be confusing for the uninitiated public, but what about the participants?*

Before we developed the original RollCall-Pro system [that uses radio frequency keypads], we spoke to many clerks, mayors, chairmen, and aldermen, etc. and asked them to identify the most difficult part of the democratic process to manage. Almost to the individual they cited their frustrations with dealing with

the highly public nature of voting. These frustrations included neighbor-influenced voting, determining the winner, recording who was there for each vote, mistakes in vote tallies, and the time it takes to conduct voice voting. This gave us a development blueprint for the needed features for our open meeting suite of products of which RollCall-Pro for Tablets is the latest.

*You mentioned time savings, is this significant?*

We were really surprised by the amount of time our customers say they save by using our voting system. One of them reports that with 29 voting members and around 25-30 votes each meeting, they shave roughly 1½ hours (about a third) off their meeting times. Most of these time savings are driven through simultaneous voting. Instead of calling out individual voters' names, waiting for their response, tabulating the votes, and then checking it twice, the votes are automatically tabulated, and the whole process takes just a few seconds.

*I understand that there are more comprehensive systems that manage the entire legislative management process and not just the meeting itself. Is your system limited by comparison?*

It depends on your strategy. There are two main factors that can dictate if a more comprehensive system is right for a particular organization. First, there's the sheer cost. End-to-end legislative management systems can cost 60 to 70 thousand dollars or more to implement, which can be well beyond the means of many organizations. Then there's annual maintenance on top of that. Our highly focused solution typically costs less than the ongoing maintenance of these other systems, and with RollCall-Pro for Tablets there's no upfront cost.

Secondly, apart from the system costs, adopting a soup-to-nuts legislative management system can place an enormous burden on everyone involved because of the need to document everything in it. Your recordkeeping and work processes must morph to fit the system. Depending on your situation, it can be a little like smashing walnuts with a sledgehammer. The system can end up managing you instead of adapting to fit your processes. This can result in significant additional administrative time and expense.

*Can you give me an example?*

Sure! Our approach is to give you the flexibility to create your agenda packet any way that fits your organization. You can then load it into RollCall-Pro for Tablets as a PDF for members to refer to during the meeting. When you hold your meeting with RollCall-Pro, your outcomes are automatically saved to a results file that you can reference any time during the meeting (if needed) or afterwards. You then have the flexibility to plug this information directly into your tried-and-true existing records process. For instance, you can simply cut & paste information from RollCall-Pro's results file into whatever format you use for publication. Adding RollCall-Pro to your existing processes is a snap.

*Is this system difficult to set up and use?*

Realizing that not all of the users of the system will be tech-savvy, we took a page from IKEA. Typically, IKEA furniture goes together pretty much one way – the right way. We invested considerable time in making sure that our Meeting Manager user interface was simple and intuitive. As a result, there's almost no training needed since the system highlights the next logical step for the group to take with a green (for "go") button – Discuss, Vote, Tally, Summarize.

The voters see what they need to do next on their screen, i.e., when it's time to vote, they see voting buttons. After they've voted, the buttons disappear, and they're returned to wherever they were in their review of the agenda. It's that simple.

*What about the tablets and smartphones – are they hard to set up?*

Tablet or smartphone users need to download a free app from Google Play Store or Apples iTunes Store. Once the app is downloaded, synching to the clerk's Meeting Manager application is just a matter of entering the clerk computer's IP address (which is shown on the PC screen) and logging in.

One nice thing about having using these app stores is that updates are pushed automatically. Most users of smartphones and tablets are used to getting updates via these stores. This makes the system much easier to administer and reduces IT demands.

*Bottom line, how much does RollCall-Pro for Tablets cost?*

RollCall-Pro for Tablets is licensed annually for each voting group (a council, board, or committee) for \$199 per voter. This includes installation support, online training, and ongoing upgrades. However, as a part of our product launch the introductory price is \$99 per voter.

*How does a client contact you to find out more about RollCall-Pro for Tablets?*

I can be reached by e-mail ([victor@rollcallsystems.com](mailto:victor@rollcallsystems.com)) or by phone (312-493-7558). And I love speaking with customers because they give me great ideas.