



Manufacturer deploys company-wide

 Skype for Business


softchoice

Consolidating and Upgrading Aging Phone Systems

When a construction materials supplier doubled in size in less than a decade, its telephony systems started showing their age. Organic growth and acquisition had left the company with three obsolescing phone systems. IT recognized that consolidating them would reduce costs and increase efficiency. It would also lead to new and improved services for its customers and approximately 4,000 employees.

“A lot of systems came through acquisition and had previously been neglected,” said the company’s Manager IT Operations. The company, which manufactures commercial roofing, insulation and other construction materials, boasts 45 manufacturing plants, warehouses and offices across North America and Europe. With most of its business conducted by phone, any system put in place had to be efficient, easy to deploy and reliable.

“A lot of people inside and outside IT knew that our phone systems were becoming archaic and that we were risking reliability,” the Manager IT Operations said.

An Existing Culture of Technology Strength

Technology is core to the business’s success. It uses a mature Six Sigma-like program to foster continuous improvement across all of its facilities. The vice-president of IT plays an active role in business strategy and supports it through business process improvement.

The drive for technology enablement is a top priority for senior leadership and permeates the entire company. “Our president is very big on seeing who he’s talking to, as opposed to being on the phone. That gets pushed company-wide. So efforts towards video conferencing and video calling are very well-received,” the company’s Network Administrator said.

Rolling Out 21st Century Communications

The company engaged Softchoice to evaluate options to merge and upgrade their systems. The team proposed an on-premise solution based on Microsoft Skype for Business. This on premise approach fit well with the company's direction to maintain greater control of their communications systems.

The company has deployed the solution across locations using consistent equipment and processes — first in new facilities, while gradually converting existing locations. Softchoice engineers trained company technicians during deployments to ensure complete knowledge transfer. Today, the company is "95 percent" self-sufficient. It relies on Softchoice Keystone Managed Services in the rare instances it needs mentorship and technical support. IT leaders at the company praise Keystone's rapid response.

Building in Reliability and Redundancy

The solution needed to be reliable in the case of system failure or disaster, a key requirement for all new technology deployments. Softchoice engineers designed the solution to incorporate local failover and remote disaster recovery. This solution brought a degree of required complexity but it was very well protected.

At Softchoice's recommendation, the company built a server farm of approximately 30 servers to power the solution. Thanks to previous training by Softchoice engineers, this is relatively simple to manage. Company technicians can do regular-scale deployments with little to no outside assistance.

"We can deploy a site pretty quickly, and it is simple to build. Once you have a basic understanding of how Skype for Business works it's very simple to deploy it," said the company's Manager IT Operations. When needed, the company turns to Softchoice engineers for guidance through its Keystone Managed Services offering. A core part of this service includes unlimited mentorship calls for direction on planning, configurations or to trouble shoot technical issues

Strengthening Collaboration and Communications

Skype for Business's reliable collaboration capabilities have proven a significant advantage. The company has achieved its mission of enabling tighter collaboration between employees. It has accomplished dependable intercommunications between its more than 40 locations. Through face-to-face or room-to-room video conferencing, the company has virtually eliminated costs associated with travel.

Where many of the company's past telephony systems lacked the means for support, the company has gained management and control. By moving to a single telephony solution, the company has staved off obsolescence, increased support and enhanced user collaboration and communications. With the heavy lifting complete, the company is now looking to Skype for Business.

Results Summary:

- Enabled stronger employee collaboration
- Reliable communications between 40+ locations
- Eliminated travel and travel expenses
- Local redundancy and disaster recovery
- Simplified management through consolidation
- A path created to enhanced customer experience

Closing Quote:

"Thanks to the solution it's been progressively easier to expand, which is what we need to meet our rapid growth."

~ Manager IT Operations