



NON-PROFIT SUCCESS STORY

Better Business Bureau brings out the best in communications with ShoreTel

CHALLENGE:

- Replace an aging and costly PBX system with a feature-rich, IP-based business communications system that improves reliability and helps reduce costs.

SOLUTION:

- ShoreTel UC system comprising ShoreGear 50 and ShoreGear 90 Voice Switches over three locations, 80 ShorePhone™ IP Telephones, and a co-location facility housing two ShoreGear T1K switches, a ShoreTel Application Server and ShoreTel VPN Concentrator.

BENEFITS:

- Monthly communications savings of about 30 percent
- Easy to manage call groups with extensive reporting for work flow optimization, resulting in increased sales
- Improved reliability and ease of management
- Increased productivity among staff with ShoreWare Call Manager for personalized communications

When it comes to understanding the communications challenges around doing business, the Better Business Bureau leads the marketplace. With a ShoreTel UC system saving money and simplifying communications management, the Boston office of the BBB is doing the best business yet.

Every day, thousands of consumers, businesses, charities, military personnel and media staff turn to the Better Business Bureau (BBB) for unbiased information. They also seek advice on the best companies to do business with, as well as today's marketplace challenges, risks and best practices. The Boston BBB office is one of about 130 BBB offices in North America, maintaining files on businesses headquartered in the Boston, Maine, Rhode Island and Vermont areas. They deal with hundreds of calls to and from consumers and businesses concerned about ensuring an ethical marketplace.

Effective communications with the public and BBB-accredited businesses are mission critical as it advances trust, honesty, transparency and responsiveness in marketplace transactions. And as a nonprofit, public service organization, the BBB is under close scrutiny at all times to keep costs down while providing exemplary customer service. However, the Boston BBB's previous phone system was becoming increasingly expensive to maintain and with offices in three

locations and remote employees, the BBB was not able to consolidate all users on one, feature-rich, easy to manage system.

"We looked at upgrading the old system, but both short-term and long-term costs were exorbitant," explained Deanna Liberti, vice president of operations for the Boston BBB office. "We were paying a total of \$7,800 a month just in phone use and networking costs for the systems at our main office in Boston, and the remote sites in Rhode Island and Maine."

Excellent customer service drives revenues

In addition to integrating communications between their offices, the BBB also wanted a communications backbone to support its growing number of remote workers. This backbone must also support an important part of the organization's daily operations—its two call centers: one for receiving and dealing with consumer complaints about businesses, and the other telemarketing group that makes about 100 calls a day to persuade businesses to apply for BBB



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Accreditation, an important source of revenue for the organization.

“Excellent customer service is vital to the credibility of the BBB and we wanted to be able to monitor our agents’ calls on a daily basis, as well as closely manage these groups so we can improve their efficiency,” Ms Liberti said.

As part of the decision-making process, Ms Liberti attended an industry trade show and saw a demonstration of both the Cisco and Mitel solutions. In addition, Boston-based ShoreTel partner, Barry Electric and Communications, was in the process of providing the Boston BBB office with a new wide area network, and suggested she take a look at the ShoreTel system.

“The features in the ShoreTel system met all of our needs for a modern, high performance communications system,” Ms Liberti said. “We already had a very positive, relationship with Barry Communications. Having just one point of contact and one expert to work with was very important.”

Cost comparison showed huge savings

Working with Andy Mehlman, vice president of sales at Barry Communications, to understand all the costs involved in an IP-based communications system, Ms Liberti compared current phone and Internet bills to the calling and networking costs of a new ShoreTel UC system.

“Barry Communications showed us how to reduce our communication expenses from \$7,800 a month to \$5,600 a month with a redesigned network and the ShoreTel system,” Ms Liberti said. “The cost of the system was well within our budget, and we knew the new features would help improve productivity. Of all the solutions we evaluated, ShoreTel best met our needs.”

Once Barry Communications had installed a new WAN for the Boston BBB, and T1 modules were in place in the co-location facility, deployment of the ShoreTel UC system was simple. The co-location facility is configured to provide disaster recovery, and includes

SIP trunking. This means that if any of the main locations drop out of the network; traffic is rerouted into another office, and disruption and downtime are minimized.

The Boston BBB installed two ShoreGear® 50 voice switches and one ShoreGear 90 voice switch at the main office, along with ShoreGear 50 at each of the remote sites. The co-location site has two ShoreGear T1K voice switches and houses the ShoreTel Application Server and a ShoreTel VPN Concentrator. This helps ensure that remote users are fully connected to the ShoreTel UC system through a VPN and the ShoreTel system’s Office Anywhere features. The BBB also purchased a total of 80 ShorePhone™ IP Telephones, including ShorePhone IP 230g models with gigabit Ethernet and ShorePhone IP 230 models.

High availability contributes to growth

“We simply can’t afford to have the phone system go down,” Ms Liberti said. “The ShoreTel distributed architecture gave Barry Communications the flexibility to recommend and implement a highly available system with a co-location facility that ensures inbound and outbound calls continue to get through, even in the event of a disaster.”

An important, always-on feature for the Boston BBB is the telemarketing and call centers. Using the ShoreWare® Personal Call Manager workgroups application, Ms Liberti can effectively manage each center, while rich reporting features have enabled her to make significant productivity and efficiency gains.

“Initially, I intended to place five agents in each call group,” she explained. “However, after looking at the call trends in the phone usage reports, I discovered that four agents would be enough. That meant two people were freed up for other important tasks.”

The reporting features also enable Ms Liberti to assess how much training agents need, and the number of calls they can handle. The telemarketing team has to make a certain number of calls to close business and meet revenue goals, so call



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analysis has enabled them to better manage their time. "Since implementing ShoreTel and closely managing calls, we have seen an increase in monthly sales," Ms Liberti added.

All employees at the Boston BBB are using the ShoreWare Personal Call Manager desktop interface application to manage their communications and link to e-mail. After deciding to switch from Microsoft Outlook, the organization was able to import the Microsoft Outlook contacts into ShoreWare Personal Call Manager, and with Google gmail. Employees can now see and listen to voicemail using their gmail interface.

Ease of management increases productivity

The ShoreTel UC system is set up with four-digit dialing, so employees at the disparate offices no longer need to remember long phone numbers, and staff use the Find Me feature to locate the right person quickly. Since there is no receptionist, all inbound calls initially go to the automated call distribution menu system and then are routed to the correct department. This also enhances customer service since the system can transfer and forward callers more efficiently to the right people.

"A significant part of our \$2,200 per month savings is due to ShoreTel's least cost routing," Ms Liberti said. "Our interoffice and remote worker VPN calls are routed as local calls whenever possible instead of long distance. The number one tip I would give to other nonprofits looking for a new phone system is to look at how each system addresses these costs."

Since Ms Liberti is the only on-staff IT expert, ease of management is also important. Previous office moves resulted in communications system downtime, which cost the organization revenues. During the entire ShoreTel deployment, the Boston BBB did not experience any downtime, and as the organization looks to expand, Ms Liberti said the system's ease of management makes it simple for her to ensure the phones keep up and running.

"ShoreTel is easy to learn, manage and maintain, which is very important to this team of one," Ms Liberti said. "New groups and new employees are productive straightaway, and can begin generating revenue faster, because they don't have to wait for their phones to become available. And that's great business."



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About ShoreTel

ShoreTel is a provider of business communication solutions whose brilliantly simple unified communications platforms, applications and mobile UC solutions promise a new rhythm of workforce engagement and collaboration. With costly complexity eliminated by design from its award winning, all-in-one IP phone system, UC and contact center solution, and its industry leading hosted business phone system, workers enjoy a freedom and self-reliance that other providers can't match. Users have full control to engage and collaborate, no matter the time, place or device, for the lowest cost and demand on IT resources in the industry. ShoreTel is headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, and has regional offices and partners worldwide. For more information, visit shoretel.com or shoretelsky.com



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