

VoIP Case Study

An Untapped Resource for Businesses

If you look in any business magazine or newspaper these days, it's hard to turn more than a couple pages without seeing an article about the hottest new technology: VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). The concept of VoIP is relatively simple - it converts sound into packets of data that travel across the Internet or a private network (just like an email) and then reassembles this data at their destination into their original form - sound.

While VoIP is the latest buzz technology, what most people don't know is that it has been used in the business world for a number of years. These days VoIP has been deployed in almost every country, every industry, and every size business.

Detractors have criticised the technology for a number of reasons including reliability, sound quality, and the cost of implementation. However, the technology continues to improve and now offers sound quality and reliability on par with traditional phone service. Whilst there is a cost to business for implementing VoIP, it is offset by significant savings for maintaining the system. In fact, the savings are so significant that the implementation cost is recovered well within the first 12 months of deployment.

A SUCCESS STORY

Shield Australia (Shield), a Sydney based import and export company, decided to implement a VoIP solution when they relocated to a new warehouse. Since Shield's business revolves around telephone data collection, a VoIP solution made financial sense i.e. it would lower their long-distance and mobile call costs as well as offer flexibility to implement advanced technical features as the business grew.

They contacted Beyond Networks in order to provide appropriate advice and technical expertise.

Staff at Beyond Networks worked with the Shield management team in order to ensure that the right solution was put into practice. In the end, it was decided to implement a Managed VoIP Solution, which included the supply and deployment of HyperVoice 2200 VoIP PBX system and remote management. In addition to supplying and installing equipment, Beyond Networks converted existing PSTN telephone cables (used to plug into a Commander System) to connect to HyperVoice 2200. With a Managed VoIP Solution, the system is continuously monitored by Beyond Networks. Consequently, any problems that can be resolved - often solved before Shield is even aware they exist.

According to Shield's accountant, Alan, the VoIP system has been a resounding success.

“A traditional public-switched telephone system would have cost us significantly more than what we’re paying for VoIP service. Having a fixed monthly rate for an allocated amount of minutes of service with VoIP allows us to effectively predict our telecom expenses each month. This is critical for a multi-channel distribution centre like Shield.”

Other than monetary savings, Shield gained the following benefits over their existing “Commander” system:

- *Business continuity across dispersed locations*
- *Enterprise level “Conferencing Call” management*
- *Monitor and record call conversation by demand*
- *Faxing from the desktop*
- *Integrated “Customer Relation Management” software*

Alan concludes by saying:

“The system is completely maintenance free to us, so we have more time to focus on our core capabilities. We don’t have to worry about software upgrades, configuration changes, and compatibility issues – it’s all done for us by Beyond Networks.”

THE FUTURE OF TELEPHONY

Shield is an excellent example of how an adopter of VoIP is using the technology to gain a competitive edge. The lesson for companies is that given the right situation, VoIP can dramatically alter operations and reduce costs. VoIP can assist large and mid-size businesses to lower costs and, more importantly, give smaller businesses the critical competitive edge they need over their bigger rivals.

As VoIP flourishes, both businesses and consumers alike will harness the advanced capabilities that the technology offers. These capabilities extend far beyond anything now available through traditional phone service.

Connecting phone calls over the Internet will inevitably lead to the convergence of voice communication with all other types of communication platforms including email, instant messaging and video conferencing to name a few. How companies customize that technology to fit the needs of their business will be the most fascinating part of the VoIP revolution.

VoIP offers unlimited possibilities. Think of what it can do for you.

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