Fabricator increases customer service and reporting capabilities with fully networked telecommunications platform

"McGladrey immediately understood our unique needs and implemented a solution that greatly increased our customer service and internal reporting capabilities. We feel that our new platform allows us to work more efficiently and positions us well for future growth.

The transition from our prior system to our new ShoreTel integrated solution was a significant step forward for us. The simplicity of use, management and future integration capabilities are the driving reasons why we chose ShoreTel as the platform and McGladrey as a partner. Their team helped us through the project at every step. The transition was fast and efficient and they ensured that the solution worked as planned."

Mike Scanlon, Director of Information Technology, Apache, Inc.

Overview

Apache is a value-add fabricator of hoses and belting, as well as custom fabrications, industrial services and retail products. The company is based in Cedar Rapids, Iowa with five service centers in the central United States. Apache was founded in 1963 and has become a nationally recognized leader in the hose and belting industry.

Background

Apache receives orders via phone, fax and online and processes them through a call center. An aspect of the company that increases customer service is the ability to troubleshoot with customers to determine their specific problem or need and ensure that they receive the correct product for their application. Therefore, calls can be lengthy, and Apache was operating an outdated, increasingly unreliable digital phone system.

One of the biggest problems they were experiencing was their call center supervisor had very limited insight into how the facility was performing. The existing system did not have extensive reporting capabilities, such as presenting average call times and overall effectiveness. Typical call center data can get much more granular, but the system simply lacked the functionality, from a real-time reporting and advanced historical reporting perspective to provide necessary trends on the call flow. Apache also did not have any advanced skills routing capabilities, such as a hierarchy to route a customer to someone with more knowledge of a specific part or system, or the ability to route inbound faxes to queues organized by call center area.

For these reasons, as well as to continue the company's growth and maintain a focus on customer service, Apache desired a new platform.

Project

Apache selected McGladrey as its communications provider because not only did the company like the ShoreTel® platform that was presented for ease of use, but also due to the team's technical staff, which understood the call center dynamic and the high processing, high volume and heavy communications necessary for success. Apache processes a significant number of calls daily and wanted an adviser that understood that atmosphere. Many companies can sell and install a phone system with the ability to make calls and take calls, but not everyone understands the efficiency that is needed in that setting.

McGladrey met with the key stakeholders and heavy communications users to perform a call behavior and call flow study. In the process, the team demonstrated the difference between how Apache conducted business with the previous system and the capabilities of the new system. McGladrey detailed all the available options and provided Apache with guidance around best practices for call centers and how the ShoreTel system would be efficient for its specific operations.

Throughout that process, the team designed Apache's desired features and functionality, and then programmed and deployed the system. McGladrey followed a methodical approach to training, bringing professional trainers to Apache to provide knowledge on the phones and the software to call center agents and supervisors. The last piece of training was the overall

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information on how to manage the system after it was in place and in production.

A key step in the process was Apache deciding to move to a new provider for its phone lines, adding another level of complexity to the project. In addition to the ShoreTel implementation, McGladrey helped the company seamlessly migrate and then port phone lines to the new environment. All told, the project was a significant migration for Apache, as it successfully completed a full overhaul of its communications with a new phone system and new carrier.

Outcomes

As a result of the new system implementation, Apache now has a platform that is currently being deployed to remote locations away from its Cedar Rapids headquarters. This provides a fully networked communications platform throughout locations that was not previously possible. These capabilities include ease of communication internally and simplicity in transferring calls to recipients in the same or another location, without requiring customers to hang up and call another number. Other benefits include:

- Improved real-time and historical reporting
- More granular statistics on agent idle time, call duration, abandoned call rates and customer hold times
- Ability to make better decisions on staffing, based on more information and business intelligence
- A fully unified communications platform, including voice mail to email conversion capability, not just within the call center, but throughout the entire company
- Increased mobility capabilities
- Real-time remote access, enabling the voice environment to be managed from anywhere, anytime

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