



Compass Health

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS

- Increased use of audio-conferencing, reducing employee travel time
- More effective mass broadcast communication capabilities
- Improved contact center management, reporting, and resiliency
- Improved communications for traveling employees
- More flexible teleworking
- Standard moves, adds, and changes (MACs) reduced from two days to less than an hour
- New site set up time reduced from two weeks to one day
- Fewer IT help desk calls related to voice communications issues

DIRECT COST SAVINGS

- Recurring annual savings of nearly \$480,000 on voice-related operating expenditures
- Recurring annual savings of nearly \$200,000 on long-distance toll charges
- Lower costs for managing the voice-mail system
- Lower phone maintenance fees

Company Overview

Compass Health is a non-profit 501(c)(3) full-service provider of behavioral health and drug rehabilitation services in Washington state. With approximately 900 employees and an annual operating budget of over US\$40 million, Compass Health serves nearly 20,000 patients every year.

The organization has 26 locations throughout Island, San Juan, Skagit, and Snohomish counties in Washington, including a seven-building campus environment at its administrative headquarters in the city of Everett.

Business Challenge

Prior to the deployment of an IP Communications solution from Cisco Systems®, Compass Health's communications system was comprised of seven different private branch exchanges (PBXs) and key systems throughout its network in addition to Verizon's (CentraNet) service at many of its locations. The voice communications infrastructure was an array of different equipment with separate maintenance contracts to various consultancies.

Similar to many small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) Compass Health did not have any PBX specialists on staff. The organization was largely dependent on Verizon and other carriers for ongoing management, maintenance, and even simple tasks such as moves, adds, and changes (MACs).

The Solution

In mid-2003, Compass Health made the full transition to a Cisco® IP Communications solution based on Cisco CallManager. The organization currently has 900 Cisco IP phones spread throughout all 26 of its sites. Additionally, all users have the Cisco Unity™ Unified Messaging software, which enables users to receive both voice and e-mail messages either via their IP phones or their e-mail inboxes. For its two patient contact centers, Compass Health has a total of 25 Cisco IP Contact Center (IPCC) Express Edition agent seats. Compass Health also uses Cisco IP Communicator soft phones that run on employees' laptops.

The organization has consolidated both its core data and its IP Communications network on Cisco equipment. Prior to the deployment of Cisco IP Communications, Compass Health had standardized on Cisco routers and local area network (LAN) switches for its core IP network.



Benefits

When the organization was contemplating a migration to an IP platform for voice communications, the board of directors mandated that any potential vendor would have to demonstrate at least \$200,000 per year in direct, out-of-pocket cost savings to justify it. In the two years since the deployment, the direct cost savings on carrier expenses alone for Compass Health has been averaging \$480,000 annually. According to Rich DeBrino, the organization's chief information officer, "Our total cost for telecommunications services, excluding data lines, used to average \$60,000 a month. With the new Cisco IP Communications solution, it was reduced to \$20,000 per month."

In addition to the direct cost savings, Compass Health is taking advantage of applications that weren't possible with the existing PBX systems in order to boost both IT and non-IT employee productivity. These applications include integrated video-conferencing, broadcast messaging, easy audio conferencing, and integrated client management and billing software with the IP-based contact centers.

(1) Improved Contact Center Management

The reporting, management and flexibility of Compass Health's contact centers has improved as a result of deploying Cisco's IPCC Express Edition. Previously, the organization had an antiquated automatic call distribution (ACD) system with limited reporting capabilities. There were two separate call centers with no capability to route calls between them. With Cisco IPCC Express, "everything from call routing, the voice prompts to the reporting is improved," according to DeBrino.

The Cisco IPCC Express has also provided Compass Health with greater business resiliency, which is crucial for a behavioral health organization's contact center. For example, now calls can be routed between call center locations. "Previously, if something had happened to the building that housed our call center, such as a power outage, it would have completely shut the center down. Now, thanks to Cisco IPCC Express, we are able to set up a call center anywhere on campus or anywhere in our entire network, almost immediately," DeBrino explains. This contact center "virtualization" that Cisco IPCC Express enables also allow agents to work from their home offices, if necessary. As DeBrino explains, "With the new system, we've got the capability to have agents be anywhere. We don't have to put everybody in one room."

(2) Less Time Spent Traveling to Onsite Meetings

With the standard audio-conferencing capabilities of Cisco CallManager 4.0 platform, employees are collaborating much more frequently, without having to travel to do so. DeBrino estimates that today, employees hold an average of 20 audio conferences daily, whereas before audio conferences were rare because outsourced conferencing services were expensive and difficult. "Nobody wanted to pay that much money for it, and it was too much trouble. They would simply drive to a meeting," DeBrino explains. Now, the frequency of overall collaborative meetings has increased, and travel time by psychiatrists and administrative personnel for onsite meetings has fallen significantly.

(3) Improved Communications for Mobile Employees and Teleworkers

The use of Cisco IP Communicator soft phone clients on laptops has enabled traveling employees to stay better connected while out of the office. Debrino says his experience is similar to his colleagues': "While traveling, I am still able to participate in conference calls, talk to staff, and keep up with my daily responsibilities without incurring expensive hotel surcharges."

The Cisco IP Communications platform has enabled more frequent and more efficient teleworking. Compass Health has introduced a "phone in a box" concept for employees who telecommute that provides them with all the same features and functionality that they would have in the office. The "phone in a box" is a kit that typically includes the following: Cisco PIX® Firewall and a Cisco 7940 or 7960 IP Phone that is configured to work from their home offices. Currently, nearly 10 percent of Compass Health's employees telecommute at least once a month.

The flexibility provided for telecommuters has expanded Compass Health's human resources options as well. Recently, Compass Health was able to hire a professional who lives in Oregon and allow him to telecommute. "This was the first time we had ever actually hired someone to work remotely."

(4) Voice-Mail Management Cost Savings and Faster Response

By deploying a Cisco Unity Unified Messaging platform, Compass Health has been able to internalize voice-mail management, eliminating the recurring carrier fees the organization used to pay to Verizon and other local telephone companies for managed voice-mail services. Today, the amount of IT staff time required to manage voice mail is minimal and does not require highly trained personnel. For example, moving a voice-mail box from one physical location to another when an employee moves offices can typically be done within

five minutes. This ease of management also results in faster completion of basic tasks, which saves employee downtime and increases productivity.

(5) More Effective Mass Broadcast Communication Capabilities

While the IT department appreciates Cisco Unity Unified Messaging for its easy management, non-IT employees have quickly taken advantage and benefited from new messaging features. With the Cisco Unity platform, Compass Health has found it easier to distribute announcements and communications to the entire organization through the broadcast voice mail and text messaging features. "There are more than 100 employees who don't have computers, but each employee has a phone and a voice-mail box. If we need to reach the entire staff, we can do a voice-mail broadcast," DeBrino explains. Setting up a broadcast to a designated group of employees is extremely easy now that the organization has a single voice-mail and messaging platform that is integrated into the corporate directory.

(6) Toll Bypass Long Distance Savings

The largest direct cost savings that Compass Health has realized from deploying Cisco IP Communications is in the elimination of tolls for long-distance calls. "Our agency is located in four counties and three different area codes," DeBrino explains. "Our greatest communications expense was in toll charges for long-distance office-to-office calls." Today, because all voice communications travel over the organization's IP network, tolls for long-distance calls have been eliminated, resulting in recurring annual savings of approximately \$194,400.

(7) Lower Recurring Maintenance Expenses and Trouble Tickets

By standardizing all sites on a common Cisco IP Communications configuration, Compass Health has been able to substantially reduce the recurring monthly charges and staff time required to manage and maintain voice communications. Under the previous network, Compass Health relied heavily on outside consultants to manage its various PBX and key systems at different locations. Because these systems were proprietary in nature and not standardized across all locations, there were very few economies of scale.

The deployment of the Cisco IP Communications solution has allowed Compass Health to bring voice communications management in-house without a large increase in staff to support it. A single consolidated IT group and help desk department manages data, voice, and video networking and applications, and all sites have standard equipment and configurations.

Because the organization had already built an end-to-end Cisco network, required training to manage the new IP Communications solution has been minimal. According to DeBrino, "Our 15-person IT team can handle just about any issue that occurs."

The key for Compass Health was to invest in IT staff and end-user training at the very beginning of the deployment. On the IT side, the training has resulted in a 15-person team that "can handle just about anything," according to DeBrino. The Cisco IP Communications learning experience leveraged the existing core Cisco networking certification of the IT engineers and has benefited staff morale and training. As DeBrino explains, "the best way to motivate IT people is to give them the opportunity to learn something new, to get trained on something interesting, and to continue to expand their knowledge by learning new technologies. We did all of those things, and it has helped staff training, retention, and morale."

For the end users, Compass Health provided several training classes and had an "IT Corner" column in the organization's monthly newsletter with answers to frequently asked questions. Now that the initial transition and training phase is complete, according to DeBrino, the volume of help desk calls related to voice communications is significantly reduced compared to the levels seen prior to the Cisco IP Communications deployment.

(8) Faster and Less Expensive Moves, Adds, and Changes

Standard moves, adds, and changes (MACs) are now much quicker and less expensive with Cisco IP Communications. Previously, moving an employee from one location to another would require a service call to the local carrier, followed by at least a day or two of waiting for the technician to make an onsite visit, which would typically cost as much as \$300.

With Cisco IP Communications in place, Compass Health's internal IT staff can perform the entire operation internally with minimal time or effort. Today, a standard MAC can be done in a matter of minutes through a Web interface directly from the centralized IT help desk.

(9) Set Up Time for New Site Locations Dramatically Reduced

The flexibility of Cisco IP Communications has made it much faster and less expensive to set up new facilities. Once a T1 line has been installed at a new location, Compass Health's IT department can have the site ready and configured with data, voice, and video connectivity within a day, instead of the two weeks of IT and telecom consultancy time previously required.

This flexibility was particularly useful when Compass Health had to temporarily move its children's facility (with 75 employees) from its home office to another location, in order to allow structural renovations to be completed at the site. With the Cisco IP Communications solution at this location, the IT staff was able to set up a Cisco wireless connection between the main building and the temporary location. This allowed employees to access the voice and data communications network resources of Compass Health's original building. Once the wireless link was established, setting up the new office was a simple matter of moving the IP phones, the router, and the LAN switches across the street to the temporary facility.

Conclusion

In addition to the hard cost savings that justified the short-term return on investment of deploying Cisco IP Communications, the greater connectivity, increased collaboration and improved business processes the system provides has changed Compass Health's overall culture. By improving overall communications, such as with teleworking and audio-conference, DeBrino says the company's IP Communications solution "has given [them] the ability to work more closely."

In the future, Compass Health plans to roll out integrated video-conferencing capabilities to offer its clients the ability to receive counseling or medical attention remotely. Many of its patients live in remote locations, and it is often difficult to schedule a particular specialist that works out of one location to offer counseling to patients located far away. As DeBrino explains, "In behavioral health, there's a shortage of psychiatrists and we have a lot of rural patients. We can have psychiatrists on the main campus visit with clients at remote offices using videoconferencing over our existing IP Communications network."

For more information

www.cisco.com/go/ipc

www.cisco.com/go/voice

<http://www.cisco.com/en/US/products/sw/custcosw/ps1846/>

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