



Industry: Healthcare Services/Non-Profit
Installation: 5 locations, 3 ShoreGear voice switches, ShorePhone IP telephones
Competition: Cisco
Date of Install: 2005



Challenge:

Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living (TRIPIL) was faced with an old AT&T telephone system that was difficult and expensive to manage and maintain. The system also utilized traditional phone lines for interoffice communications between its far-flung locations, which meant hefty long distance charges.

Solution:

ShoreTel provided TRIPIL with a comprehensive Voice over IP (VoIP) system, including ShoreGear voice switches and ShorePhone IP telephones.

Benefits:

- Powerful user features simplify communications for people with disabilities.
- TRIPIL saves half on long-distance charges every month because interoffice communications now traverse data lines.
- Simplified management allows TRIPIL to manage and update the system from in-house, saving money on service provider fees and accelerating the process of moves, adds, and changes.

S U C C E S S S T O R I E S

HEALTHCARE SERVICES/NON-PROFIT

TRI-COUNTY PATRIOTS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING SIMPLIFIES PHONE SYSTEM AND SAVES MONEY WITH SHORETEL

ShoreTel System is Easy to Use and Manage for Organization Run by and Serving People with Disabilities

The mission of Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living (TRIPIL) is to promote independent living in Southwestern Pennsylvania for and by individuals with disabilities: To enable them to take control of their lives and make decisions about themselves and their future, to ensure that the necessary support services are available to enable them to be active participants in their communities, and to prevent unnecessary institutionalization. TRIPIL, with its headquarters in Washington, Pennsylvania and four additional locations across the state, is an independent living center, owned and operated by people with disabilities and meeting all criteria set by the Rehabilitation Act, Title VII. Through community connections, individuals of all ages and abilities are able to work together to help themselves and improve their community.

In 2005, TRIPIL had an AT&T Spirit phone system that was becoming so outdated that replacement parts could only be ordered on eBay. In addition, the organization was opening two new offices in Pennsylvania, bringing its location count to five. It was time to investigate new telephone systems and consider new solutions that would cut costs, improve productivity, and simplify management. At the time, about half of TRIPIL's long distance charges were attributed to interoffice communications. In order to cut these charges, TRIPIL decided to evaluate Voice over IP (VoIP) systems. After thorough research, the organization narrowed down its choice to solutions from Cisco and ShoreTel.

Next, TRIPIL reviewed demonstrations of each system. Because TRIPIL works with people who have a variety of disabilities, ease of use of the system, both physically and technologically, was important. The layout and size of the keys of the ShoreTel handsets proved better than the layout on the Cisco phones, and the ShoreTel speakerphone proved to be better quality. In addition, TRIPIL appreciated the powerful user features of ShoreTel's system and the easy-to-use management console that would help it move system management in-house. TRIPIL chose ShoreTel.

"The overall design of the ShoreTel phones was much better than that of the Cisco solution," said Jeff Woods, System Administrator for TRIPIL. "The ShoreTel phones meet the specific design needs of our users with disabilities and the clarity is excellent."

THE SWITCH

ShoreTel, with the help of its local integration partner, provided TRIPIL with a ShoreGear-T1 voice switch, two ShoreGear-120/24 voice switches and three dozen ShorePhone IP telephones. TRIPIL has now migrated all of its offices to ShoreTel IP phones.



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ShoreTel phone systems are easy to use, simple to manage, flexible, and reliable. With the ShoreTel system in place, all TRIPIL users are now on the same phone and voice mail system using 4-digit dialing to reach employees at any location and dialing people by name. The least-call routing capabilities allow TRIPIL to minimize costs by avoiding toll charges. For instance, if someone in the main office in Washington, Pennsylvania calls someone in Charleroi, the call is routed through the organization’s data lines, through the Charleroi office, and out to the person being called, thus bypassing toll charges.

MEETING SPECIFIC NEEDS OF TRIPIL USERS

The most important thing about the ShoreTel solution, according to Woods, is the ease of use for the disabled users. “Prior to ShoreTel, we bought phones designed for disabled people but they just weren’t user-friendly,” said Woods. “With ShoreTel, the wireless, hands-free solution was easy to implement and the problems with wires getting hung up in wheelchairs was eliminated. ShoreTel allows our users to move around while communicating, which they could not do before. Our blind users are also able to easily use Call Manager features because they are keyboard-based. ShoreTel nicely meets all of our specific disability needs.”

MEETING BUDGET, SAVING MONEY

Since the ShoreTel VoIP solution was deployed, TRIPIL has been saving at least half on its monthly long-distance telephone charges because many charges were simply due to interoffice communications between its statewide locations. Now that those calls traverse the organization’s data lines, those charges are eliminated. In addition, the solution itself proved to be competitively priced and TRIPIL could make the switch to VoIP in steps to accommodate budgets and schedules.

“It was appealing that we wouldn’t have to rip out all our existing phones—with ShoreTel, we could use what we had already until we had time and money to replace the old ones,” said Woods. “We are budget-conscious and ShoreTel came in and was able to work within our budget constraints. It’s a cost-effective solution that immediately started saving us money.”

SHORETEL DELIVERS EASE OF USE AND RELIABILITY

The ShoreTel system provides integrated messaging, such as directory dialing, contact screen pop, caller ID, call waiting, and calendar integration for TRIPIL users. ShoreTel’s powerful desktop productivity software transforms Microsoft Outlook into a multi-media communications center – giving users control over both voice and email messages. The friendly, graphical interface of Call Manager provides easy access to sophisticated features so TRIPIL users spend less time navigating complex telephone systems and more time getting things done. Also, with Call Manager, TRIPIL’s four receptionists have access to online directories that help them quickly connect callers with the right person and enhance collaboration with other users.



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"Users love the voice mail integration and the ability to easily forward calls between offices," said Woods. "We're also able to direct intercom messages to groups all at once, rather than sending them to each person, which was time consuming. The intercom and Find Me Follow Me features also make it easier for users to find me quickly as well. And the conferencing capabilities are much better than the old system we had, which was simply a speakerphone in the middle of the table. Now people conference together using their own handsets and sound quality is superb."

In addition to powerful user features, ShoreTel's Call Control software is distributed to every voice switch, which eliminates any single point of failure in the system. In the unlikely event of a ShoreGear voice switch failure, other switches on the network will automatically take on the call-processing load so no call into TRIPIL is ever dropped.

SYSTEM SIMPLIFIES MANAGEMENT

ShoreWare Director is ShoreTel's browser-based management interface. From anywhere on the network, Woods or a colleague can launch a Web browser and gain access to ShoreWare Director. Through this browser, every site and feature can be managed, including voice mail, automated attendant and desktop applications. Adding a new user simply entails clicking "add new" and entering the user's name, which in turn updates the centralized database and notifies every voice switch. Once the user is entered, a mailbox is created, the automated attendant dial-by-name and number feature is updated, and online directories are updated—all within seconds.

"I can even use a VPN and connect into the ShoreTel system from home to make moves, adds and changes if necessary," said Woods. "It's that easy."

THE BEST THING

TRIPIL is pleased with its choice of ShoreTel for its telephone needs. "The ShoreTel system is the best thing that ever happened to TRIPIL's infrastructure," said Woods. "The system is so much easier to use and manage, and it offers many more features than our last system. We didn't even have redial or voice mail features with the old system, and ShoreTel provides those and so much more. If this system works so well and so easily for people with disabilities, it will work for everyone."