

## LEADING GOVERNMENT CONSULTING AND SERVICES FIRM IMPROVES BOTTOM LINE WITH SHORETEL VoIP SYSTEM

### Outdated Panasonic PBX Replaced with State-of-the-Art ShoreTel Telephone System



#### Challenge:

ARTI, faced with a dated analog phone system, needed a solution that would help merge the company's voice and data networks, simplify management, and lower total cost of network ownership (TCO).

#### Solution:

After evaluating Avaya, Cisco, Nortel, and ShoreTel, ARTI deployed a ShoreTel telephone system, including IP phones, voice switches and software, at the company's Alexandria, Virginia-based headquarters.

#### Benefits:

ShoreTel system's ease-of-use means a quick return on investment and lowered TCO, and the powerful feature set enhances productivity and improves customer service.

Advanced Resource Technologies, Inc. (ARTI) is an information services provider and systems integrator with expertise in providing LAN/WAN systems, IT security services, security operations and management, program management and logistics, and managed IT services. ARTI has 40 internal users in its Alexandria, Virginia facility and 250 employees contracted out to government sites, staffing call centers, providing administrative support, and meeting the specific needs of the firms' government and commercial customers.

### LOOKING TO CONSOLIDATE VOICE AND DATA NETWORKS

In early 2004, ARTI was planning to move its headquarters from one side of Alexandria to the other. With a legacy Panasonic PBX system that was aging quickly (10 years old and counting), Matt Brady, the company's network engineer, recognized a need to move to a new technology and consolidate ARTI's voice and data networks.

"The Panasonic phone system was over 10 years old, and it was getting difficult and costly to obtain parts for the circuit-board based PBX," said Brady. "The system was also becoming unreliable, which is not an option for us."

After considering analog solutions from Avaya and Nortel, and researching every opportunity, ARTI decided to implement Voice over IP (VoIP) instead of another analog system. With extensive data experience, Brady had limited VoIP experience, so he turned to ARTI's systems integrator, for insight, which immediately directed Brady to look at solutions from ShoreTel. Brady closely scrutinized ShoreTel solutions, along with Cisco VoIP products, poring over private research and published articles and gathering information from various user groups.

"I spoke with other administrators who deal with the same cost and scale challenges that we face here at ARTI, and they all raved about ShoreTel on ease of use, ease of administration, and cost-effectiveness," said Brady.

### SHORETEL SOLUTION

ShoreTel provided ARTI with dozens of ShoreTel IP 210 and ShoreTel IP 560 Phones, as well as a ShoreGear™ T1, ShoreGear™ 120/24 and ShoreGear™ 60/12 Voice Switches. The ShoreGear 60/12 is deployed to handle organizational scalability, and it also acts as the analog switch for modems and fax machines. ARTI's integrator, which previously only handled the organization's data network, helped with the initial VoIP



design and implementation (which took a mere two days) and provides annual maintenance, offering assistance only with major changes, since the management of the ShoreTel system is so simple and straightforward.

## **EASE OF USE ACCELERATES RETURN ON INVESTMENT**

The entire ShoreTel phone system cost ARTI about \$55,000, but the savings are dramatic, according to Brady. “The new ShoreTel system quickly paid for itself because I can manage it all myself—data and voice—instead of calling someone in for voice support, which is costly,” said Brady. “I haven’t calculated it exactly but the return on investment is no more than about one or two years when it comes to the management savings alone.”

ARTI uses ShoreTel’s ShoreWare Director, a browser-based management interface, to manage the system from anywhere on the network, from controlling or changing the configuration of switches, to managing the voice mail, automated attendant and desktop applications. When a new user is added through ShoreWare Director, the centralized database and switches are automatically notified, a mailbox is created, and the dial-by-name and number attendant and online directories are updated. The new user is then automatically sent an email with a URL to download their desktop productivity application. The processes are much simpler than competitive solutions.

“Cisco is cumbersome to work with,” said Brady. “Just adding a mailbox entails a long string of command lines. The ShoreTel system is menu-driven and browser-based, so I can manage the system easily from any web browser—even over a VPN from home. And moving an extension is just as simple and takes a minute or two—it’s as easy as making a user account change in Windows. You simply log into their account, open up the properties page and make changes. It’s very intuitive.”

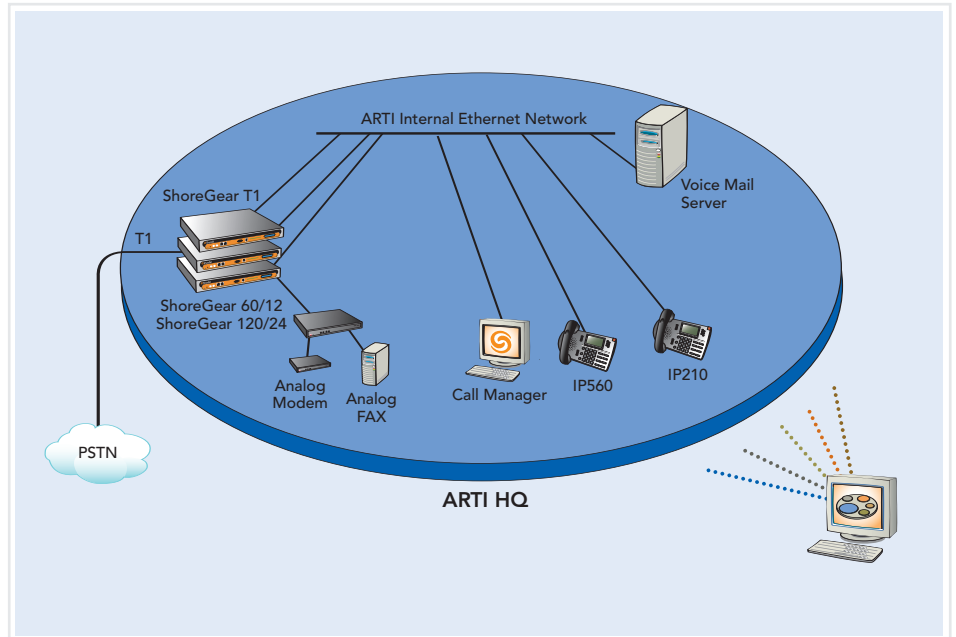
System updates are also quick and easy, taking an hour or two at the most for ARTI. Once the server is updated and re-booted, the new code is pushed to the switches automatically and then to all of the phones.

Vendor neutrality was important to ARTI, since their infrastructure includes a mix of equipment. ShoreTel systems integrate with switches and routers from all the leading data vendors. “If we’d gone with Cisco, everything would have had to be Cisco—there is no vendor-neutrality with them,” said Brady. “With ShoreTel, it doesn’t matter what’s on your network—ours is half Cisco and half HP, but that doesn’t matter because ShoreTel is vendor-agnostic.”

## **SUPERIOR RELIABILITY**

ShoreTel products are designed with reliability in mind, and Brady is glad the outdated, unreliable system has been replaced. ShoreGear voice switches are embedded devices with a real-time operating system, delivering 99.999% reliability. They employ a unique call control architecture in which switches communicate with each other as peers and distribute call processing on the network. In other words, if a switch goes offline, another automatically picks up the slack, ensuring uninterrupted service, and the distributed call processing eliminates single-point failures – providing a level of reliability exceeding even traditional voice systems.

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## **ROBUST FEATURE SET MAKES LIFE EASIER, ENHANCES REPUTATION**

ShoreTel desktop productivity software transforms Microsoft Outlook into a multi-media communications center – giving ARTI employees control over both voice and email messages. With ShoreTel desktop applications, ARTI employees spend less time navigating complex telephone systems and more time performing critical, revenue-producing tasks. The friendly, graphical interface of Call Manager provides easy access to sophisticated features, including on-the-fly conferencing and document sharing.

ShoreTel Call Manager also includes SoftPhone, a utility that delivers telephony capabilities to any PC. With calls directed to a laptop and a headset plugged into the USB port, employees can work from anywhere. ARTI employees who travel a lot appreciate the power and simplicity of SoftPhone, as does Brady who often dials in from home using the feature. Receptionists enjoy an even higher level of functionality. ShoreWare Operator software provides ARTI receptionists with critical information necessary for exceptional customer service. For example, when the phone rings, a call-routing log displays the caller's experience within the system to the ARTI receptionist. Before transferring callers, the call-transfer screen displays information about who is available and who is already on the phone. With this unprecedented level of information, operators not only connect callers faster than ever, but also give them the highest level of professional service. Also, dynamic, online directories eliminate paper directories – which are usually out of date anyway and not usually available online. With the complete company at their fingertips, along with knowledge about who is available and where a caller has already been sent, the receptionist can transfer using a simple drag-and-drop tool, to the most appropriate person—to their extension, cell phone or even their home phone.



“Gone are the days of those large banks of buttons with scribble marks erased time and time again to re-assign extensions,” said Brady. “With ShoreTel, it’s all GUI-based, easy to use, and a powerful customer service tool.”

## **FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE**

ShoreTel keeps ARTI well-informed of future features, and Brady is especially looking forward to some of the mobility, WiFi, and integrated management updates planned. “ShoreTel has won us over and we plan on capitalizing on every upcoming feature they have scheduled,” said Brady. “The system’s incredible features, along with the expertise I get from ShoreTel and our integrator have convinced us that we made absolutely the right choice. We look forward to working and growing together for a very long time.”

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