



Success Story

Habit OPCO

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Jane Mandly, MIS Director, Habit OPCO

THE CHALLENGE

Habit OPCO is one of the largest accredited healthcare organizations of its kind in New England, providing drug addiction treatment services to patients on an outpatient basis. The company launched operations in Boston in 1986 and today provides services in 21 communities throughout Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

In 2008, when Habit OPCO consisted of 12 offices with plans to open several more locations, MIS Director Jane Mandly determined it was the time to upgrade the company phone system. "Many of the phone systems in our offices were aging, and each office had its own system so we had a variety of technologies to manage," Mandly said. "This made support a challenge, and we did not have any integration among the offices, so inter-office communication was not efficient."

With the number of new offices that Habit OPCO was about to open across a multi-state area, supporting the phone systems would become increasingly more difficult. And the lack of integration would have an even greater negative impact on inter-office communication. Mandly thus sought a solution that would be easy to support and would enhance communications.

"We not only wanted to improve upon basic features, such as conference calling, but we also wanted to integrate voice and e-mail so that it would be easier to check messages and communicate with employees in other offices," Mandly said.

THE SOLUTION

To take on the communications challenge, Habit OPCO turned to a trusted partner. "Covisia Solutions had supported our data network including our wide-area-network for many years," Mandly said. "Because they had done so well and demonstrated their capabilities across a variety of technologies, it made sense to also partner with Covisia for our communications network."

Key Benefits: Covisia - Cisco Unified Communications Deployment

- Reduces capital costs by allowing remote-office phones to function by connecting to the main data center system.
- Lowers on-going phone usage costs by allowing personnel at different offices to talk via wide-area-network rather than regular phone lines.
- Creates a turnkey telecommunications solution that can be deployed easily at new offices.
- Simplifies communication among offices with dial-by-extension capability and easy-to-use conference calling.
- Simplifies phone-system management by bringing all offices onto the same system and allowing for centralized support from the company data center.
- Enhances employee productivity with unified messaging that allows e-mail to be accessed by voice mail and voice mail to be accessed by e-mail.

Covisia recommended that Habit OPCO deploy a Cisco Unified Communications solution. The technology can unify voice, video, data, and mobile applications on fixed as well as mobile networks. The specific solution for Habit OPCO includes two redundant Cisco CallManager servers that run the overall telecommunication system from the data center in Braintree. Covisia also deployed a Cisco Unity voice mail server integrated with a Microsoft Exchange server. This allows employees to review voice mail messages via e-mail, and they can also review e-mail messages via voice mail. A Cisco router handles T1 and analog phone lines while Cisco switches power the phones and provide connectivity to each remote office.

At each office, Covisia deployed a Cisco switch and router that can connect all office phones into the system when Habit OPCO is ready to convert each office. With all of the routers and switches in place, the company also has the option of installing Cisco phones on their own since connecting and deploying the phones are possible with minimal phone support from Covisia.

"We upgraded the phones at the corporate headquarters as well as eight of the remote offices in the first two years and plan to have all offices on-line by 2012," Mandly said. "We upgrade on a schedule to manage capital costs while considering the age of the current phone system at each office."

THE BENEFITS

With the centralized Cisco Unified Communications phone solution deployed at the Habit OPCO data center, the company has eliminated the capital expenditure of having to install phone systems in each office. "We just buy the phones and licenses, and the deployment costs are much less since we can do them on our own and deployment time is relatively quick," Mandly said.

The month-to-month phone costs for each connected office have also been reduced since inter-office communication now takes place via internal extension calls rather than outside phone lines. Habit OPCO also has a turnkey design in place for every new office it opens as well as for any existing offices that need a phone upgrade.

In addition to simplifying communication among offices, the solution is also easier to manage since all system administration can be performed from the data center. Employees have also become more efficient. The unified messaging capability, which integrates e-mail and voice mail, allows employees to check both voice and e-mail messages whether they have access to only a phone or only to e-mail. The conference-calling process among multiple offices is also now easier to use.

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IN SUMMARY

As Habit OPCO was about to expand operations by opening new offices across a wide geographic area, the company decided to deploy a centrally-managed, unified communications solution in existing offices as well as the new offices. Habit OPCO turned to Covisia Solutions, which designed and deployed a Cisco Unified Communications solution. The solution reduces the cost of deploying phone systems for each office as well as monthly inter-office communication costs. Habit OPCO employees have also become more efficient through streamlined inter-office calling and with the ability to retrieve e-mail messages through voice mail and voice mail messages through e-mail.

Covisia Solutions, Inc.

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