

Strata CIX Digital Business Communication Systems

Toshiba Makes a Splash at Niagara



L: Andrew Wirtjes of Niagara and David Case of **smplsolutions** at Niagara's bottling plant.



L: Andrew Wirtjes of Niagara and David Case of **smplsolutions** congratulate themselves on installing a Toshiba system that helps save Niagara more than \$10,000 per month.



R: David Case of **smplsolutions** shows Andrew Wirtjes of Niagara how to program his Toshiba telephone.

*Water. It's the essence of life. More than half of the human body is water, and it makes up three-quarters of our planet. We depend on it for our very existence, as do the thousands of customers who purchase Niagara Water for their everyday water needs. One of the leading bottled drinking water companies in Southern California, Irvine-based Niagara Bottling LLC turned to Authorized Toshiba Dealer **smplsolutions** of Lake Forest, Calif., for a reliable, technically advanced telephone system that is as essential to Niagara's business as water is to the human body.*

Mission: Network and Centralize the Telephone System, Add VoIP

Niagara needed to network its three facilities together — its headquarters and call center agents in Irvine and its bottling plant and main offices in Ontario, Calif., — while allowing for future growth. In addition, Niagara's management wanted to maximize the investment in its existing Toshiba Strata DK280 telephone system by improving internal and external business communications.

Solution: One System for Three Offices, Remote Workers

David Case, president of **smplsolutions**, met Niagara's needs using two Toshiba Strata CIX670 business communications systems plus Toshiba IP (Internet Protocol) telephones at the company's Irvine location. Case explained, "We replaced two Toshiba telephone switches (one in Irvine and one at the Ontario main office) with one switch at Niagara's Ontario main office facility "Ontario 1." Then we added ACD (Automated Call Distribution) for customer service call-ins at the Ontario 1 system and routed the calls to the Irvine call center agents."

By using IP telephones at the Irvine office, where call center agents are located, ACD calls are actually done over the Internet. To make this work without changing any of the telephone numbers that Niagara's customers were accustomed to dialing, Niagara had the phone company direct the Irvine telephone lines to ring at the Ontario 1 facility. As a result, when customers dial the Irvine office telephone number, the call is routed to Ontario 1 and goes into the auto attendant for customer service. It is then automatically placed into a queue for the next available CSR (Customer Service Representative) who resides back at the Irvine office. When a CSR becomes available, the call is routed over the Internet back to the Irvine Office. Moving to IP telephones at the Irvine facility enabled the elimination of 80 individual telephone lines and allowed Niagara to consolidate all its bills, resulting in a savings of \$5,000 to \$6,000 per month. "This allowed us to negotiate a pre-set amount for our outgoing calls," Andrew Wirtjes, director of Technology & Information of Niagara, said.

After completing the installation of the CIX670 at Ontario 1 and implementing the IP application at the Irvine location, Niagara installed a second CIX670 at its huge manufacturing and warehouse location "Ontario 2," which is located eight miles from Ontario 1.

Case explained, "This new switch at Ontario 2 was set up to provide not only digital telephones for employees at Ontario 2 but also to provide a back-up PRI for the telephone switch at Ontario 1. Ontario 2 was set up with a QSIG connection over the Internet to Ontario 1's switch, which allows calls at either office to use the other office's PRI if one of the circuits became inoperable or if callers at one facility needed more than 23 voice channels. The QSIG also allows the employees at Ontario 2 to share the voice mail at Ontario 1, and it allows all Niagara employees to call each other with four-digit dialing."

Photo Credit: Nick Koon Photography

Result #1

Result #1: Remote Workers Plug in Anywhere

Of Niagara's 300 employees, only about 100 of them are on-site. Many of the others, particularly in sales and tech support, work remotely from their homes, using IP telephones. In fact, Niagara's owner Andy Peykoff, recently named Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst & Young, is one of the company's remote workers. He uses his Toshiba IP telephone to stay connected with customers and employees. Working predominantly from home, he can even contact employees at the office by dialing their four-digit extensions. Eliminating long distance costs has saved the company nearly \$500 per month. Wirtjes also uses an IP telephone at his home office or at hotels when he travels. "People just don't realize how easy it is for me to take my IP telephone and plug it in wherever I am, and it's just like getting and making calls at the office."

Result #2

Result #2: Remote Management With Complete Control

Wirtjes added, "Having all three facilities connected over the Internet is a real benefit. For example, having the CIX670s integrated into my network allows our IT staff to log in and make programming changes from virtually anywhere. We are able to manage everything on the CIX670 — from the Internet capabilities to having it open and close our facility gates when trucks arrive and leave the properties. In fact, the Toshiba solution has saved us thousands of dollars in soft costs related to programming and management."

Wirtjes also appreciates the flexibility of moves, adds and changes with the IP telephones. He explained, "To move a phone, it's just as easy as this: unplug the IP telephone, move it, and plug it in. The system automatically finds it and logs it in."

Wirtjes also appreciates the ACD system's extensive reporting capabilities. He said, "We use it to track productivity, usage and make plans to improve efficiencies as our customer base and employee needs grow."

Result #3

Result #3: Toshiba Delivers on Migration Path

In choosing the new Toshiba Strata CIX670 system, Wirtjes said Toshiba's migration path was a strong motivation. "Toshiba's strong migration path meant that we could meet our goals without having to replace all of our existing Toshiba equipment."

By upgrading from its existing Toshiba system, Niagara saved at least a third of the hard equipment costs over buying a completely new Toshiba system, according to Wirtjes. He added that a bid from a well-known IP-only equipment supplier was more than double the cost of migrating the Toshiba system.

As a result of the Toshiba System upgrade, Niagara has also decreased its overall calling costs. Case said, "We have eliminated long distance calls between the Irvine and Ontario facilities, saving an average of \$1,350 per month for the client, making calls between Niagara's facilities virtually free. In addition, we improved Niagara's outgoing long distance charges by having long distance calls originate solely from Ontario."

Bottom Line: A Centralized, Network System That Saves Thousands

"Together, Toshiba and **smpl**solutions met our goal of having a centralized telecommunication system that would work at all three locations and appear completely seamless to callers," Niagara's Wirtjes said. "It also allowed us to retain our investment in our original Toshiba system and delivers cost savings of nearly \$10,000 every month. You could say that Toshiba helps us manage our flood of calls and saturate the market with Niagara Water."



*L: Andrew Wirtjes of Niagara and David Case of **smpl**solutions migrated Niagara's older Toshiba telephone system to the new Strata CTX670 with Voice over IP, eliminating long distance charges between Niagara's facilities.*