

C.M. ALMY & SON, INC. + SHORETEL

ShoreTel 's VoIP solution improves C.M. Almy & Son's catalog sales call center and simplifies phone system management



End of lease on Nortel PBX

C.M. Almy had separate Nortel PBX phone systems and telephone numbers for its Maine and Connecticut locations. The Nortel lease was up for renewal so the company decided to look at alternative solutions.

VoIP system that was easy to use and manage

In a quest to have one general number for the entire company, C.M. Almy determined that it would deploy Voice over IP (VoIP). It narrowed its choice down to solutions from Cisco, Nortel, and ShoreTel.

C.M. Almy evaluated each vendor's system, placing priority on solution flexibility, ease of implementation, and the ability to use analog telephones until budget would allow them to be replaced with VoIP phones. C.M. Almy also needed a system that would support and even improve the operations of its busy catalog sales call center. The retailer chose ShoreTel for its comprehensive and cost-effective solution.

"The other solutions would have required that we swap out all our phones to either VoIP phones or a different model of proprietary phone than what we had already, which would have been extremely costly," says Jim Johnston, manager of information

Challenges:

C.M. Almy was looking to replace its PBX-based telephone system with a VoIP system that would provide ease of use, ease of management, and powerful features to improve employee productivity, customer service, and satisfaction.

ShoreTel Solution:

ShoreTel provided the retailer with a complete VoIP solution, including ShoreTel Voice Switches and ShoreTel IP Phones.

ShoreTel Benefits:

- Unified presence with single phone number
- Improved customer service and satisfaction
- Ability to manage the system in-house
- Avoided toll charges with least-cost routing

technology for C.M. Almy. “ShoreTel is flexible enough that we can use our analog phones and add VoIP telephones as we’re able, which was more cost-effective than the other solutions.”

ShoreTel answers religious retailer’s prayers for top-performing VoIP

ShoreTel, with the help of its integration partner, provided C.M. Almy with six ShoreTel Voice Switches for its three locations and ShoreTel IP Phones. The connection between the sites is now over a virtual private network (VPN), as opposed to the previous frame relay network. The deployment, which was planned in phases to avoid downtime, took two weeks and the cutover from analog to VoIP was seamless.

Improved Call Center

C.M. Almy has a call center dedicated to catalog orders, which generates the largest portion of its sales revenue. With ShoreTel Contact Center, call center employees are armed with key information and control, enabling a significantly higher level of personalized attention for callers.

“Contact Center is helping us determine how we will evolve our call center,” explains Johnston. “ShoreTel generates information that helps us determine how we can improve the balance of the calls into the call center. We are looking at dividing calls by information as specific as area codes, and Contact Center makes that possible.”

The catalog sales call center is divided up into two queues based on what callers are ordering, either stock items or custom-ordered products. ShoreTel Auto-Attendant provides the 24-hour automated call answering information and outgoing prompts, which can be customized and linked to the time of day and/or day of week. Individual groups can also have their own menus with unique greetings and options.

Ease of management

ShoreTel Director is a browser-based management interface that provides C.M. Almy with easy access to the system from anywhere on the network,

enabling the management of every site, including voicemail, automated attendant, and desktop applications. It takes mere seconds to add a new user, and the system automatically updates the centralized database and every voice switch.

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says Jim Johnston
Manager of Information Technology
C.M. Almy & Sons

In addition to the ease of adding new users, the ShoreTel system is simple and cost-effective to maintain. “ShoreTel is fast and easy, and this is true for all aspects of the system, from installation to moves, adds, and changes,” says Johnston. “We didn’t have to bring in an expert to manage the phone system—with general networking experience, it’s easy to handle. Before, the telephone system had its own group to manage it. Now it’s part of the IT infrastructure and we’re able to make changes as quickly and easily as we can make changes to our network.”

With ShoreTel’s email integration, employees can manage their email and voicemail activity centrally and efficiently right from their desktop. The ability of the ShoreTel system to track phone calls, export and distribute original voicemail messages to one person or a group of people, and keep a running history of calls into each number is helpful in continually monitoring and improving customer service.

Productivity boost, cost savings

With the ShoreTel system in place, all 145 C.M. Almy employees are now on the same phone and voicemail system, using four-digit dialing to reach employees at either location and even dialing co-workers by name. Callers no longer need to dial different numbers for the Maine or Connecticut offices—they dial one number and the automated attendant directs them to the right place.

ShoreTel's least-cost routing capabilities also allow C.M. Almy to minimize costs by avoiding toll charges. For instance, if an employee at the Maine location calls a supplier in Connecticut, the call is routed through the company's data lines, through the Greenwich, Connecticut branch, and out to the customer, bypassing toll charges.

ShoreTel delivers on C.M. Almy's wish list

C.M. Almy is investigating plans to integrate the ShoreTel system into its CRM solution, which will give employees even more robust information on callers before picking up the phone. Integration with CRM will provide screen pop-ups with detailed customer information, which will maximize sales and enhance the customer's experience.

"ShoreTel delivered exactly what we expected to get out of a VoIP system—powerful features, full system control, in-depth call history information, and ease of use," concludes Johnston. "Going forward, we anticipate even more benefits."

Everybody is impressed with the system and it's making life a lot easier for everyone. It's providing essential information we need to constantly make changes for business improvement and we look forward to enjoying the system even more as we utilize all of its capabilities."

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ShoreTel. Brilliantly simple business communications.

ShoreTel, Inc. (NASDAQ: SHOR) is a leading provider of brilliantly simple IP phone systems and unified communications solutions powering today's always-on workforce. Its flexible communications solutions for on-premises, cloud and hybrid environments eliminate complexity, reduce costs and improve productivity.

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