

CITY OF SIOUX FALLS + SHORETEL

Sioux Falls switches from a Fujitsu PBX system to ShoreTel VoIP to save \$30,000 a year and improve responsiveness



Challenges:

Sioux Falls had a Fujitsu 9600 PBX phone system that it was quickly outgrowing, had limited functionality, and proved to be too costly to upgrade.

ShoreTel Solution:

After carefully considering VoIP systems from leading vendors, Sioux Falls chose ShoreTel for a complete solution, including voice switches and IP telephones.

ShoreTel Benefits:

- Savings of \$30,000 per year
- Tight integration with business applications
- Improved emergency response
- Improved productivity and customer satisfaction

City needs a more powerful system

Sioux Falls had an aging Fujitsu 9600 PBX phone system and decided it was time to evaluate a replacement rather than upgrade.

More flexibility and centralized voicemail

The City of Sioux Falls decided to look at Voice over IP (VoIP) solutions. “We wanted to go with a system that wasn’t limited by copper on our campus,” says Ed Castle, IT manager with the City of Sioux Falls. “We also wanted a system that would provide integrated and centralized voicemail so that everyone in every office would be on the same system. We decided to look at VoIP systems from Cisco, InterTel, Nortel, and ShoreTel.”

The city initiated a pilot project, within the information technology (IT) division, with 20 phones there and 20 phones at remote sites. The purpose of the pilot project was to test performance and system features. Cisco, InterTel, and Nortel all required a great deal of capital to get the pilot going, whereas ShoreTel met the city’s budget for the evaluation. Once it was deployed, the choice became clear when the IT team saw ShoreTel’s capabilities.

“We really liked the simplicity of the ShoreTel system, plus all of the features and functions,” says Monte Watembach, network administrator with Sioux Falls. “Once the pilot project was done, we knew ShoreTel was the way to go.”

ShoreTel VoIP puts city workers on the same page

Over the course of two years, ShoreTel provided Sioux Falls with a comprehensive VoIP system. Across its 10 Sioux Falls sites, which include buildings that house libraries, City Hall, and other departments, the city deployed ShoreTel voice switches and more than 460 ShoreTel IP Phones.

With ShoreTel in place, city employees are now on the same phone and voicemail system, using four-digit dialing to reach co-workers at any location. ShoreTel Personal Call Manager, integrated directly with Microsoft Outlook, gives Sioux Falls employees the equivalent of a desktop PBX for managing voice communications. Users can see the status of the person they are calling and employees can manage their email and voicemail activity centrally and efficiently.

In addition to powerful Personal Call Manager, ShoreTel Operator Call Manager software provides the city's receptionists with key information and control. Most of the city's receptionists also use cordless headsets, so they are no longer bound to their desks. Productivity increases because these employees can take on added responsibilities while answering the telephone.

"Operator Call Manager has essentially replaced the old bulletin board system we had that was used to indicate where people could be found," says Deb Christofferson, telecommunications specialist with the city. "It's a much more efficient and professional way to deal with incoming calls."

With the ShoreTel system, if a city staff member dials 911, the emergency response team gets the exact location of the caller – down to the floor, department, and actual phone. At the same time, if a city manager or director making a non-emergency call wants to block caller ID, it's easy to do so.

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Ed Castle, IT Manager
City of Sioux Falls

Workgroups enhance customer service, fewer T1 lines reduce costs

The city is also using ShoreTel workgroups, which consolidate specific inquiry calls to one number and route calls to the next available call center staff member. Each Workgroup can have its own phone number so that citizens calling in for a specific purpose get right through to that department.

"We've seen immediate customer satisfaction improvements," explains Castle. "Last year, we handled over a million calls—including internal calls and outside calls. We handled this with just two T1 lines. We feel really good about being able to handle this volume of calls with such a high level of customer satisfaction."

ShoreTel Success Story

The library in Sioux Falls uses a ShoreTel voice switch connected to City Hall by a point-to-point wireless connection. This allows the library to get much more bandwidth without the need for a dedicated T1.

“One of the greatest things with the ShoreTel system is that some of the remote sites are connected wirelessly and it just works,” says Castle. “Our goal is to continually increase bandwidth to the remote sites and eliminate monthly line charge costs. Even engineers using bandwidth-intensive GIS applications are noticing better performance over the wireless connection.

ShoreTel UC saves Sioux Falls \$50,000 the first year and \$30,000 in ongoing annual savings

Castle estimates that the city saved at least \$50,000 the first year the entire ShoreTel system was in place, due to the T1 charge savings and Centrex numbers that were eliminated. Ongoing savings are estimated at about \$30,000 per year in line charges.

In addition, the city uses ShoreTel Director, ShoreTel's browser-based management interface, to access the system from anywhere on the network. Through this browser, every site and feature can be managed, including the voicemail, automated attendant, and desktop applications. Moves, adds, and changes take mere minutes. With the previous solution, the city had to wait for—and pay—its service provider to complete these tasks.

“It's easy to make changes to the ShoreTel system—from moves, adds, and changes to making workgroup configuration changes,” explains Watembach. “We didn't need to hire phone specialists – we're able to leverage the backgrounds of our existing IT people.”

“The bottom line is that with ShoreTel, we can do a lot more with the existing IT team, which is essential when an organization like ours needs to maximize time and budget,” concludes Castle

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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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