

CITY OF LAKEWOOD+SHORETEL

ShoreTel leaps tall mountains to improve the City of Lakewood's communications



Challenges:

The City of Lakewood needed to replace an aging phone system and consolidate communications between City Hall and multiple other facilities and field personnel.

ShoreTel Solution:

A ShoreTel IP telephony system provided the city with ShoreTel Voice Switches and more than 1,000 ShoreTel IP Phones.

Aging system too old to salvage

The city's 22-year-old phone system became increasingly costly and time-consuming to maintain. It offered limited or basic features for the 1,200 full-time and part-time employees at more than 24 offices across the city.

Rock-solid communications that taxpayers expect

Local governments face constant challenges in fulfilling their constituents' requirements. The City of Lakewood, Colorado, a thriving Denver suburb, deals with thousands of phone calls daily, and every call needs a response.

The City of Lakewood is Colorado's fourth-largest city, with nearly 150,000 residents, between Denver and the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. Covering an area of more than 44 square miles, the city provides a full range of municipal services that include police, public works, water utilities, recreational activities, cultural events, and family assistance programs.

"We want to ensure that every call into the city's offices reaches the right person as quickly as possible," explains Boris Naschansky, chief information officer for the City of Lakewood. "But on the old system, incoming calls rang three times at one desk, three times at the next, and so on, finally ringing in the director's office, by which

ShoreTel Benefits:

- More accurate call routing
- Increased reliability
- Reduced support costs
- Lower TCO

time if the party was still on the line, they were frustrated. Getting stuck in the cycle of returning calls and leaving voicemails back and forth was just not productive.”

Constituents often complained that calls went unanswered and voicemail boxes were full. City employees were frustrated with the phone system's limitations. It was not possible to add more remote offices to the phone network affordably, and staff there was isolated and underserved. Even worse, the existing voicemail system was increasingly failing, requiring the IT staff to send broadcasts to alert city staff that messages might be lost “due to overnight maintenance.”

“Our IT help desk and engineering teams were constantly on pins and needles running fire drills, and frequently calling out contractors to do simple phone moves and changes,” says Wendy Shrader, manager of network services. “So we began to collect users’ needs from each department and sent out an RFQ and then an RFP to find a replacement system.”

Naschansky and his team consulted with their previous vendor Siemens, and also attended presentations from Cisco, Nortel, and Avaya. They required extensive references to first qualify as a proven supplier. “We were looking for a vendor that was experienced in VoIP and not just traditional PBX or hybrid phone systems. We wanted them to understand the local government setting. After seeing ShoreTel at an industry event, and then visiting three ShoreTel government installations, we all felt they stood out in both of these areas,” explains Shrader.

Both ShoreTel and Avaya made the final shortlist, but it was ShoreTel’s focus on customer satisfaction and the system’s ease of use, that drove the decision to purchase and install the ShoreTel UC system. The Lakewood team was impressed that ShoreTel reseller partners receive their incentives based on their customer satisfaction scores.

Ease Of Installation Opens Up Communications

Shawn Cullingford, Lakewood’s telecommunications engineer, explains, “The ShoreTel system is so simple to use, we all found the user interface extremely intuitive. Unlike some of the other vendors, ShoreTel is not three different operating systems on separate servers. We certainly did not want to add that level of

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complexity to our network.”

Flexible integration improves services

A key element of the ShoreTel deployment included taking advantage of ShoreTel’s open standards-based architecture to integrate a call recording system. Police investigators can choose to record calls with witnesses, suspects, and other persons of interest. “We were able to set the system up so that some calls to the police department can be recorded at a touch of a button. This is important for cases that end up in court,” says Shrader.

Other important features that the city required were call-handling modes, and workgroup capabilities that would ensure all calls into the city’s main number are answered quickly.

ShoreTel Success Story

"We have implemented eight work groups already, and seen a significant improvement in workflow," explains Cullingford. "The largest is at the City Clerk's office, where between eight and ten desks can pick up calls."

"We are also using auto-attendants as backup in case a hunt group does not answer," Shrader says. "And we've been able to record greeting messages in Spanish in the automated call distribution feature, which is another useful tool that helps us better serve the community."

Many of the city's employees are starting to take advantage of the easy-to-use ShoreTel Communicator, the desktop user interface that integrates with Microsoft Outlook to eliminate the use of printed phone books for city staff use.

ShoreTel's management simplicity saves time and money

Ease of use also extends to management simplicity. "ShoreTel's simple Web-based system management console has made life significantly easier, and we're much more productive compared to the old system," says Cullingford. "Now we can use a PC from any desk at the city to make changes in a matter of minutes. We no longer have to call out contractors, or need to invest in specialized phone system certification training."

The cost of implementing ShoreTel was about one-third of what the other vendors bid. This savings enabled the city to re-cable its remote facilities and replace all of its network switches and routers. The city is currently testing the ShoreTel video

capabilities to replace a customized system so that judges initiate a video call for an arraignment with a few mouse clicks from a PC.

"We told our users from day one that if they can think of a better way to process and handle their calls, we can do it within the ShoreTel system," concludes Shrader. "Not a day has gone by when we do not hear from someone that they love their new ShoreTel phone system."

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Wendy Shrader, Manager of Network Services
City of Lakewood

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.

World Headquarters
960 Stewart Drive
Sunnyvale, CA 94085
USA
shoretel.com

+1 (800) 425-9385 Toll Free
+1 (408) 331-3300 Tel
+1 (408) 331-3333 Fax

EMEA
Inspired
Easthampstead Road
Bracknell, RG12 1YQ
+44 (0) 1344 208800

APAC
8 Temasek Boulevard
#41-03 Suntec Tower 3
Singapore 038988
+65 6517 0800

