

INDUSTRY

- Long-term care

CHALLENGE

- As part of a larger outsourcing project, Allied Solutions decided to outsource their IP Telephony infrastructure to take advantage of the stability, security, and redundancy that a data center could offer.

SOLUTION

- Outsourcing with CDW's Hosting and Managed Services solutions.

BENEFITS

- Ability to leverage CDW's investment in state of the art data centers and proven, audited compliance with industry standards
- Cost savings by outsourcing rather than upgrading in house
- Ability to focus IT staff on projects that grow the business, rather than maintenance tasks
- 100% Infrastructure Availability Guarantee
- 24x7x365 support from CDW Network Operations Center

"One of the key factors in selecting CDW to implement was their strong background in project management. We were comfortable that it would be implemented properly."

Dave Hilger
Vice President Information Services
Allied Solutions

Allied Solutions Moves IP Telephony System to CDW Data Center

**The Customer**

Allied Solutions is one of the largest providers of insurance, lending, and marketing products to financial institutions. Their goal is to work with clients every step of the way, utilizing technology-based solutions that are customized to fit their needs. This commitment has earned them the business of more than 3,000 clients nationwide. They offer some of the most innovative products and services available in the marketplace today.

In addition to their dual headquarters in Carmel, Indiana and Plano, Texas, they maintain more than 17 regional offices and service centers around the country.

The Situation

Allied Solutions' clients, including banks, credit unions, and financial institutions, are under tremendous pressure from their auditors to comply with industry regulations. That same pressure translates down to service providers such as Allied Solutions. In order to meet these demands, Allied Solutions was left to make an important decision.

After weighing all of their options, Allied Solutions decided to outsource their entire network infrastructure. "Trying to meet our clients' standards and needs was a big pain," said Dave Hilger, Vice President Information Services at Allied Solutions. "And how we were going to get to a level to meet their needs was going to be an onerous task. By going to a data center, we were able to take advantage of established processes and procedures, ensuring our clients' standards would be met."

As part of this project, Allied Solutions also felt they had a good opportunity to upgrade the support and infrastructure related to their IP Telephony system. "We decided to co-locate the IP Telephony system as well, to let it take advantage of redundant power, security, and stable infrastructure," said Hilger.

The Allied Solutions IP Telephony system consists of a CallManager cluster acting as the head end, with 17 node offices connecting to it over multi-protocol label switching (MPLS). This phone system supports more than 600 employees and 17 offices nationwide.

NOTE: CDW acquired Berbee Information Networks in 2006.



ABOUT CDW

CDW has delivered technology solutions that drive bottom line results for our customers. Our entrepreneurial spirit and values guide us and we continue to set the standard for uncompromising customer support and technical leadership.

WHY CDW

CDW is a proven partner for IT solutions, including unified communications, security, remote managed services, information worker solutions, and virtualization and optimization. CDW is a leading provider of technology for business and is among a handful of companies to achieve the highest level of partnership with our strategic partners.

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"Whether the system would work, we had big questions," said Hilger. "There weren't dozens of companies out there that were having a hosted voice over IP system."

Since CDW had originally helped implement the IP Telephony system at Allied Solutions, the same CDW team came back to assist Allied Solutions with designing and testing a hosted solution. The original project included changing all the phones in the company and implementing a new network with all new network hardware. With this successful project under their belts, Allied Solutions felt that CDW was well qualified to handle the outsourcing of their IP Telephony system.

"One of the key factors in selecting CDW to implement was their strong background in project management," said Hilger. "Once we got over the technology hump, we were comfortable that it would be implemented properly."

Seamless Transition

With CDW's help, Allied Solutions had determined that this solution would indeed provide them with all the benefits they were looking for, without sacrificing any reliability or functionality. The next step was to transition their equipment to the CDW data center.

"The move was a piece of cake," said Hilger. Allied Solutions and CDW set up a temporary system at the Allied Solutions Carmel, IN office, which provided all of the functionality of their current phone system. Once that system was operational, Allied Solutions and CDW moved the original phone system from the Carmel, IN office to CDW's data center.

"The residual knowledge was right with the engineers," Hilger added. Because of their familiarity with the system, CDW was able to easily rebuild the entire infrastructure in CDW's data center.

Once the data center system migration was finished, and everybody was comfortable that all needed connectivity was in place, it was just a matter of changing IPs, renaming some servers, and rebooting.

"I think cutover actually took about an hour. It went that smoothly," said Hilger. "The rest of the phones in the rest of the offices blinked twice, and then came back up like nothing had changed, because logically, nothing had changed. It was just moved 800 miles to the northwest. It worked very, very well."

The Results: Lower Costs, Reliability, Stable Infrastructure

As with any IP Communications implementation, Allied Solutions created a communications platform that is open to expansion, integration, and innovative service solutions.

Allied Solutions' employees now have flexible communication with their customers and their peers. They rely on a system that is stable, reliable, and easily adaptable to their needs.



In addition, as communication requirements change, this system can be enhanced, refined, and expanded by CDW's experienced data center IP Telephony engineers. And, by leveraging CDW's Managed Service Offerings, Allied Solutions benefits from a Service Level guarantee, ensuring that their phone system will work as promised.

Because Allied Solutions relies on CDW's Managed Services for maintenance rather than their own IT staff, they are now able to focus that staff on technology projects that help grow the business.

"The Allied Solutions IT team has refocused their energies on application support," said Hilger. "We have 13 people supporting roughly 600 employees. From a day-to-day perspective, they are now really focused on supporting, directly, the business needs, rather than the infrastructure."

Why CDW?

CDW's SAS 70, SysTrust, and ITIL credentials provided authoritative third-party assurance that they had the operational excellence to deliver secure and reliable solutions 24x7.

In addition, all CDW co-location services are backed by an industry-leading 100% Infrastructure Availability Guarantee.

And beyond that, CDW's outstanding customer service was a deciding factor when Allied Solutions chose a provider.

"We get treated as if we are the biggest customer, and I know we're not" said Hilger. "Any problems we have are dealt with quickly, professionally, and efficiently. There have been issues in the past where I have had to tell my Account Manager to stop, because he was doing too much. But they're always exceeding my expectations, and I sure don't mind."

