



Tower Travel Contact Center Takes Flight with the Avaya IP Office Solution

Industry:

Travel and Leisure

Business Challenge:

- Multiple call center locations with remote agents
- Inefficient call center operations with increased networking costs

Solution:

Avaya IP 406, Avaya IP 403, Compact Contact Center, Voice Mail Pro

Tower Travel Management provides superior customer service with agents working from home and located in their two contact centers. The company relies on the Avaya IP Office solution to effectively connect the contact centers seamlessly and route valuable customer calls to any available agents, providing quick service to all callers.

About Tower Travel Management

Tower Travel Management is one of the largest independent, full-service travel agencies specializing in corporate travel in the U.S. Since its founding in 1979, the company has built a solid reputation on its ability to deliver what it says it can: making business travel easier and as economical as possible.

Tower relies heavily on technology to deliver services such as online booking and reporting, quality control, ticketing, contact center management and wide-area networking, which offer its customers efficiencies and unlimited access to information needed to make travel arrangements and travel budget decisions.

Business Challenge:

Tower Travel Management operated two main contact centers: one in its Oakbrook, Illinois headquarters and another in the metropolitan Chicago area. The centers operated independently, each

handling incoming calls from customers via its own Avaya MERLIN Legend® system, but sharing a voicemail system through use of a tie-line. Six remote agents also connected to the system using leased 56k lines and a hub-and-spoke router.

As Tower grew, it began to serve customers outside of the immediate area, and it also sought to pursue corporate customers in new cities. In order to provide the highest quality service and support to these accounts, the company felt it important to expand its customer service operations to include additional agents in new areas. So Tower added remote agents in other parts of Chicago, as well as in Texas and Tennessee. All were operating as separate contact centers – with separate queues and different call volumes at different times – when using the MERLIN Legend system. Remote agents were also using ineffective and costly methods, such as leased access lines, to connect to Tower’s networks.

Michael Foster, Tower’s IT Project Manager, recognized that he could provide improved customer service and lower the company’s costs if he could





unify the many locations from which agents worked and provide a single call queue that would handle customers' call more effectively. He sought a system that used VoIP technology, so that remote agents could connect to the system in a cost effective way.

"We wanted to be able to have any agent anywhere be a member of one consolidated call center that could be managed from a number of locations," Foster explained. "I have three managers who can activate an agent and do any type of administrative management from any device that's connected to the Internet. That's very important for capacity management: we're able to round out peak call times in one location by leveraging against another."

So Foster began a search, looking for a communications system that could unify the contact centers into a single, unified contact center operations and let remote workers connect in a more cost-effective manner.



The Solution: The Avaya IP Office System

Tower researched convergence technology for approximately eighteen months, and viewed potential solutions from three vendors during that time. Foster found the Avaya IP Office system coupled with additional Avaya components to best suit Tower's needs, as it offered many useful features, including those needed to efficiently manage a call center, all in the standard offering of the product. The cost benefit was also a big deciding factor.

"There was not another system available to a company of our size that included the features we desired for the price that we paid," Foster said. "And we had worked with Avaya and were very comfortable with their level of support and expertise."

With the decision made, Foster scheduled his installation.

Foster first chose an IP406 as his main system. Implemented in the Oakbrook headquarters, the system handles all calls for Tower's call center. An IP403 system was also installed in the Chicago call center. Using this system as a router was a more cost-effective method to link the Oakbrook and Chicago centers together, while offering callers a much higher quality of service than they received when the previous routers were used. The IP406, was programmed with enhanced applications, such as the Compact Contact Center and VoiceMail Pro, which offered the best possible environment in which agents could operate. Remote call center agents are also able to dial in to the IP Office system via a simple DSL connection, rather than with a more expensive T1 line.

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Michael Foster, IP Project Manager, Tower Travel Management

The Avaya IP Office Brings Cost Savings, Allows Call Center to Take Off

The Avaya IP Office solution has provided everything that Tower Travel Management needs today, along with significant growth potential for the future.

First, Foster is now able to consolidate his call center agents into a single group, offering improved use of all available agents, including remote workers, to answer customer calls in an efficient manner. In addition to consolidating the call queue into one, the ease of adding remote workers or agents to the Avaya IP Office system offers Tower significant business opportunities.

“Because a connection to the Internet is all you need [to access the IP Office system], you could be in China and if you can get a broadband connection to the Internet with a static IP address, I can put you on my IP Office system,” said Foster. “Now I can schedule an agent in Tennessee as part of my corporate call center. She’s part of the call queue and logs in and out just like everybody else. I can track and get a report on her productivity. I can see when she’s on the phone, just as though she’s in the same building as I am.”

“This technology opens up huge revenue possibilities for us. With just one agent, we can open up a branch office anywhere in order to attract new business.” Foster stated.

Most significant is the considerable telecommunications savings that Tower is realizing as a result of its IP Office implementation. The system is priced attractively, and in addition, it eliminates the need for expensive T1 lines for remote workers: DSL or cable modem connections are used to connect agents to the system. Elimination of leased T1 lines for remote agents has saved Tower over \$2000 per month.

“Our Tennessee agent alone had a long-haul 56K line connecting her to our network, costing us \$1500 per month. Now she has a \$90 per month cable modem with a static IP address,” Foster said. “The savings our company has realized by eliminating T1 lines alone almost pays for the system.”

As an early adopter of Avaya’s newest small to mid-sized business solution, Tower’s installation wasn’t without its challenges, but the rewards far outweigh them. With the help of Avaya and a local BusinessPartner, Tower’s IP Office system is truly acting as the solution it was designed to be.

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Michael Foster, IP Project Manager, Tower Travel Management

“Ultimately, we are successful because Avaya and our BusinessPartner stayed with us,” Foster explained. “They accommodated our requests, and took a “we’re gonna work through this” attitude. They got whatever resources we needed and did whatever it took to make us happy. And we are very happy.”

Learn More

To find out how Avaya IP Office can enhance your communications solutions, please contact your Avaya Authorized BusinessPartner or Avaya Client Executive, or visit www.avaya.com/smallmidbusiness.

For more about Avaya and our other award-winning solutions, visit www.avaya.com.

About Avaya

Avaya enables businesses to achieve superior results by designing, building and managing their communications networks. Over one million businesses worldwide, including more than 90 percent of the FORTUNE 500®, rely on Avaya solutions and services to enhance value, improve productivity and gain competitive advantage.

Focused on enterprises large to small, Avaya is a world leader in secure and reliable IP telephony systems, communications software applications and full life-cycle services. Driving the convergence of voice and data communications with business applications – and distinguished by comprehensive worldwide services – Avaya helps customers leverage existing and new networks to unlock value and enhance business performance.



IP Telephony

Contact Centers

Unified Communication

Services

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