

Answering the Call to Make a Smart Business

Case Study::...



Industry:

Transportation/Freight

Profile:

Tradewinds, Inc. is a full service transportation company providing time sensitive services to manufacturers, retailers and distribution centers throughout the United States. The company specializes in handling long haul, dry van, and truckload freight. Tradewinds conducts its maintenance, dispatch and administrative operations from its headquarters in Carmel, Indiana. More details can be found online at www.hoosiertradewinds.com

Situation:

Tradewinds was unable to meet the performance standards it set for itself due to tremendous growth and outdated technology. After implementing the Vonexus system, they went from a chaotic, inflexible, stagnant system to a streamlined, cost effective, and flexible communications system.

Solution:

Vonexus EIC
(Enterprise Interaction Center)

Hoosier Tradewinds has created a niche within the transportation industry by providing outstanding customer service coupled with a keen sense of punctuality. They have built their company around the premise of cutting-edge technology, experienced drivers and operations personnel who know the industry and know what it takes to exceed their customer's expectations.

These aspirations have served them well. In 2004, the company experienced exponential growth. They doubled in size and brought on 8 new employees over a short time period. Tradewinds quickly realized how difficult it was to manage the influx of incoming calls and facilitate the communications needs of their staff and customers, while maintaining a high level of customer service.

"Communicating by phone is our lifeline," said Ben Becker, Chief Information Officer for Tradewinds. "It's our main communication with our customers and employees," Becker added. Due to the increase in customer and employee calls and limitations of their existing communications system, the workload was not being distributed evenly and messages were not being answered or returned promptly.

"Our call structure was total chaos," Becker said. Tradewinds had one line for all incoming calls, when a call came in it would ring on everyone's phone at the same time. "It was a free for all on who could answer the line first. Having several phones constantly ringing in a small, open room created for a very loud and chaotic work environment," Becker added.

Tradewinds had a Toshiba CTX 100 communications system that was struggling to keep up with their growing demands. It lacked sophisticated call routing capabilities and was prohibiting them from achieving the customer satisfaction standards they set for themselves. To add to the chaos, their current system was not capable of providing accurate call statistics.

The Toshiba CTX 100 did not have the flexibility Tradewinds needed; it was time for a change. "We were feeling the pain of being locked into a conventional phone system that no longer met our business needs and we were tired of spending time, energy, and money managing the costs and complexity of our existing system," Becker said

Tradewinds contacted G3 Technology Partners to help with migrating to a new solution. They wanted a communications system that was tailored to their needs, one that would give them control over how they communicated. Ultimately, resulting in the ability to improve customer service not only with their external but internal customers as well.



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G3 Technology Partners and Tradewinds contemplated several options before making a final solution. “It’s key that customers look into the future and plan ahead. This helps to ensure they are making a smart business decision and not just a dollar decision,” said James Tyler, Senior Technician with G3 Technology Partners. “We had to take into consideration the company’s growth rate and future plans, not to mention Tradewinds was looking to push the envelop with technology,” Tyler added.

After extensive research and consulting, Tradewinds decided to go with Vonexus’ latest product line and switch over to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology. The Vonexus system completely integrates with Microsoft’s® suite of products and includes Unified Messaging.

With the Vonexus system and VoIP in place, Tradewinds operates more seamlessly and has entered into the new world of convergence. Becker said he likes the user interface and that it’s simple to operate. “It was a nightmare to administer our old system,” he added.

Now the company’s communications system is more sophisticated and functions like an actual call center. The Vonexus system does all the incoming call organizing and routing based on what the customer decides. With the previous system, when one of the company’s drivers called his manager and the line was busy, the call went directly into voice mail. Now, a software system routes these calls automatically to the next available manager.

If all managers are busy, the driver’s call is placed on hold and he/she is informed of the anticipated hold time. As soon as a manager is free, the next call in the queue is placed; offering a much more streamlined approach.

External customers benefit from the same streamlined approach as well. When a customer call comes in it’s automatically directed to the appropriate sales person who deals with that particular client. If there is no answer, the call is automatically directed to the next person in line. Relationship selling is key for Tradewinds and the Vonexus system maximizes the company’s efficiency with very little downtime along with having the capability to find employees wherever they are.

“So far the new communications system is working wonderfully. It’s had a huge impact on driver satisfaction and there’s some huge savings potential here,” Becker said. Corporations, like Tradewinds are increasingly reducing their long-distance calling costs and improving customer service by updating their phone systems with new technology.

“One of the biggest changes after going with the Vonexus product line is the calmness it has given us. If you walk into our operations room today vs. when we had the PBX, it’s much more of a controlled and more efficient environment,” Becker said.

Flexibility is one of many advantages to this system. It’s an investment that has the capability

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to grow as your company grows, without having a lot of hardware changeouts.

Room to grow is key for Tradewinds who currently has 30 users and a communications system that has the capacity to grow to 300 plus users. "This product was the best fit for Tradewinds, because it saves them from having to upgrade in the near future, which not only results in a cost saving but a time savings as well," Tyler said.

In addition to flexibility, the Vonexus system offers an abundance of features, ones that are standard and not add-ons with additional costs. Tradewinds is particularly fond of having Unified Messaging, which is fully integrated with Microsoft Outlook. By having this feature, employees at Hoosier Tradewinds can listen to voice mail messages, view faxes and send voice messages directly from Outlook. Making it effortless to view, prioritize and handle these types of communications.

Since the installation, Tradewinds has recognized a substantial decrease in the need for technical assistance. They can now take care of the day-to-day moves, adds and changes (MAC) work internally. Becker noted, since the Vonexus system is Windows based there is a familiarity and ease to figuring it out. "Changes to the system take no time at all. It is so wonderful. If you know Windows you can figure out how to make simple MAC's on your own," Becker said.

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Tradewinds has also realized having access to reliable call data is invaluable. "Prior to installing the Vonexus platform, we did not have any call statistics. Now we have reliable data that is easy to compile," Becker said. In addition to tracing the number of received inbound calls versus abandoned calls the system tracks statistics such as hold time. "Currently, the average driver waits 22 seconds, but the system will alert managers in the operations room with an alarm if a driver is on hold for two minutes, we had no way of knowing this before," Becker said.

The new system has been in place for seven months and Tradewinds is receiving exceptional feedback. "Our customers and drivers are getting to someone right away. I am very pleased," Becker said.

Migrating towards the Vonexus system was obvious for Tradewinds because it offered them more "bang for their buck". They were able to get all the functionality they wanted, while achieving their short- and long-term goals.

G3 Technology Partners transformed Tradewinds' communications and gave them back the control they needed. Integrating high quality voice and high-speed data services into one affordable solution, resulted in significant cost savings and improved customer service.

"We have only begun to scratch the surface of the system's capabilities," Becker said. Tradewinds plans on experimenting with the new system to find out just how far it can take them down the road.

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