WHOLESALE AIR CONDITIONING AND PARTS SUCCESS STORY

National Air Conditioning Wholesaler Displaces Avaya for Cost Savings and Better Customer Service

When Russell Sigler tripled in size overnight, the existing Avaya system needed to be replaced just as quickly. ShoreTel UC provided simple, cost-effective nationwide VoIP.

Since 1950, Russell Sigler has been providing wholesale air conditioning supplies and parts from its home office in Tolleson, Arizona. Distributing top-quality HVAC and refrigeration parts of top suppliers, including Totaline and Carrier brands, the company has developed a reputation as a market leader. Today, Russell Sigler provides sales and distribution services across the United States from its branch offices located in Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas.

After acquiring more than 30 branch offices, tripling the size of the business, Russell Sigler needed to reexamine how to support communications for the sales force, technicians, vendors, and customers. With 700 employees now spread across 30 locations, the existing Avaya phone system would need to be expanded. But after pricing new phone equipment and services, Russell Sigler realized the system expansion would be cost prohibitive.

They turned to Starnet Data Design, a trusted third-party business partner, for help, and learned about ShoreTel. “Rich Unterbrink, IT Manager at Russell Sigler, asked us to assess his current technologies and assist him in designing, configuring, and deploying a new voice and data network for his 36 locations. At that time we decided to go with a centralized model and move his data systems from his corporate office to an offsite data center. We also partnered with XO communications to build and deliver a MPLS network in under 45 days for all 36 sites (possibly a world record, and a great accomplishment by XO),” explained Roger Nenes, Arizona Regional Manager at Starnet Data Design.

“After working with Eryc Espinoza, Sigler’s voice engineer, we quickly realized that ShoreTel would provide enormous value as opposed to reinvesting to update the Avaya infrastructure and add equipment to the sites that lacked any Avaya technologies,” continues Nenes.

“Starnet played a huge part in helping Sigler turn a great idea on paper to a reality with ShoreTel. With the current system, it would...
be too expensive to make all the new sites ‘talk’. Once I heard about ShoreTel, I knew it was the right decision for us. ShoreTel made it simple to do what we wanted with one unified system,” says Rich Unterbrink, IT manager for Russell Sigler.

Choosing Simplicity and Improved Communications

Shortly after learning about ShoreTel simplicity and cost efficiency, Russell Sigler selected a ShoreTel Unified Communications (UC) Solution to streamline enterprise communications and collaboration. “Communication is very important in our business—it is imperative a call gets answered when it’s 115 degrees outside and a technician is calling in for support. We have contractors calling in to place orders and pickup at any of our stores. Technical support is also offered to contractors on the job. From customers to sales, we want to be accessible as fast and efficiently as possible,” explained Eryc Espinoza, Systems Admin for Russell Sigler.

Russell Sigler’s ShoreTel solution comprises the ShoreTel UC Platform with purpose-built distributed voice architecture, ShoreTel Voice Switches for reliability, ShoreTel Core Software for ease of deployment, management, and scalability. Also critical to the solution is ShoreTel Communicator, ShoreTel IP Phones, and ShoreTel Support. Purchasing more than 750 ShoreTel licenses, Russell Sigler is primed for uncomplicated growth and flexibility.

“We’ve attained a modern VoIP solution where we can have multiple workgroups at multiple branches nationwide, and have all our branches on a single system for much less than what Avaya or other vendors were going to charge. There are so many features we now have to pool resources, stay connected, and eliminate wasteful expenses,” Unterbrink furthers.

Improved Sales and Employee Productivity

ShoreTel Core Software provides the underpinning for an advanced business communication system, with voice routing, automated attendant, unified messaging, call accounting and reporting, and impressive workgroup functionality. These essential capabilities are coupled with built-in ShoreTel intelligence and distributed over a highly scalable architecture for administrative visibility into the system and plug-and-play simplicity.

ShoreTel systems come with a Follow Me Find Me feature, making it very easy for Russell Sigler staffers to route incoming calls to their cell phones, another desk phone, or even a home phone. More then just a call forwarding task, ShoreTel’s Follow Me Find Me is an intelligent process of routing calls and allowing the recipient to determine call priorities and whether or not to accept calls or relegate to voice mail.

“Employees in the field can now talk to their customers any time they’re out of the office. This is so helpful for our sales team, helping them to make sales instead of having potential customers leave voice mail or possibly goes with a competitor because they couldn’t reach us,” states Espinoza.

Russell Sigler staff is especially excited about the ShoreTel Workgroups for all-inclusive call center tasks. “We are now able to help customers so much faster with the way we have our workgroups set up for queue handling. Now, for example, a customer in Phoenix can be taken care of by an employee in San Diego, California, because our queue handling will roll to any available agent in the workgroups. This is a huge benefit because customers are not left on hold for long periods of time or forced to leave a message,” Unterbrink states.

ShoreTel Communicator further paves the way for seamless interaction via video, instant messaging, and wired and wireless voice. ShoreTel’s intuitive interface makes training simple, and reduces the IT workload with only a single application to support and no additional servers needed. Communicator delivers immediate access to online directories and personal contact lists, and offers a unique combination of phone and IM presence for the utmost flexibility in how to stay connected. Call handling is all grown up with ShoreTel’s user-defined capabilities for routing and managing calls. ShoreTel Communicator
offers advanced features such as IM, Softphone, personalized call handling, and high-quality video.

“The ease of ShoreTel is amazing. It allows all employees to use ShoreTel Communicator to set their own greetings, and with the 5-call handling modes, they can set up for all occasions. I like being able to pre-record a greeting instead of having to change it every time I am out of the office for different reasons or lengths of time. We have real-time tools that give us flexibility in how we work,” exclaims Espinoza.

Chilling with a Blast of Benefits
Russell Sigler has only had its ShoreTel platform in place since July of 2010, yet the company is able to list more benefits than branch offices. The company has significantly cut the costs related to old analog telephone lines. “We are using a SIP provider along with ShoreTel, which allowed us to cancel a lot of the old analog lines, most of which were not even being used. And ShoreTel’s least-cost routing feature offers additional savings—it routes calls based on the cheapest route, which can be a great idea for any business looking to cut costs without sacrificing quality,” says Espinoza.

“Also as new sites came online their PSTN trunks moved from local dial tone to SIP trunks in the Sigler data center. Local PSTN is now used for emergency and WAN failure, providing a great cost savings,” clarifies Nenes.

In addition to cost savings, Russell Sigler is also seeing increased employee productivity from implementing newer technology. “ShoreTel Sales Rep Sean Fair and I designed a solution that would not only save Sigler money on their current telephony spend by integrating ShoreTel and the existing Avaya platform, but provide them an easy transition to deploy ShoreTel to the branch offices as their team went through and refreshed technology, and increase productivity,” concludes Nenes.

Russell Sigler plans to crank up the merits of its ShoreTel system by creating more workgroups in the near future. “We want to ensure that customers can always speak to a live person and not have to leave a message or wait on hold. We would also like to integrate our Sage CRM database into ShoreTel so our sales reps will have the customer information as they take the calls,” Unterbrink explains.

Russell Sigler has recently earned the number one spot on the Arizona Corporate Excellence Awards 2011 List of fastest growth companies. “We are really happy with the direction and success of our company. And now we’re also really happy with the direction and success of our VoIP solution. The benefits of the ShoreTel System are through the roof,” Unterbrink finishes.

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Eryc Espinoza
Systems Admin
Russell Sigler, Inc.

About ShoreTel
ShoreTel is a provider of business communication solutions whose brilliantly simple unified communications platforms, applications and mobile UC solutions promise a new rhythm of workforce engagement and collaboration. With costly complexity eliminated by design from its award winning, all-in-one IP phone system, UC and contact center solution, and its industry leading hosted business phone system, workers enjoy a freedom and self-reliance that other providers can’t match. Users have full control to engage and collaborate, no matter the time, place or device, for the lowest cost and demand on IT resources in the industry. ShoreTel is headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, and has regional offices and partners worldwide.
For more information, visit shoretel.com or shoretelsky.com

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