GOVERNMENT/MUNICIPAL SUCCESS STORY

City of Pensacola Adds Progressive Communications and Dramatic Cost Savings to its Long List of Municipal Benefits

A Florida municipality deploys ShoreTel UC with ShoreTel Enterprise Contact Center to improve cost efficiencies, internal operations, and citizen services.

At the intersection of beauty and brilliance lies the jewel that is Pensacola, Florida. Home to long stretches of pristine sugar-white beaches, the Naval Air Station and world-famous Blue Angels, Pensacola is situated in the panhandle of northwest Florida on the Gulf of Mexico. The Pensacola area has many celebrated attractions, including historic museums and villages, and two forts that provided protection during the Civil War. The city also maintains world-class golf courses and recreational opportunities.

The original city limits of 9.75 square miles were determined by then military governor Andrew Jackson after winning the First Seminole War against the Spaniards in 1821, eight years prior to his presidency. Nearly two centuries later, the City of Pensacola boasts a population over 50,000 and an area more than 22 square miles. The municipality manages a staff of almost 800, a budget of over $200 million, the Pensacola International Airport, a 50-acre Port Authority, and more than 30 city buildings.

Rich in tradition and history, the City of Pensacola is also very progressive. With a very engaged mayor and highly experienced city administrator and staff, the City has been able to launch successful programs to benefit the community. For example, the municipality operates an Office of Sustainability that fosters an environmentally responsible and greener Pensacola, which also reduces energy consumption costs to tax payers. Another bright spot is the Pensacola 311 Citizen Support program that enables citizens to report issues and make service requests online. The 311 includes a fully functional mobile app available on iPhone, iPad, Android and Blackberry devices for anywhere-anytime convenience.

Looking for Progressive IP Communications

Governments have a responsibility to be very accessible to the communities they serve. For the City of Pensacola, outstanding communications is almost everything. “The City has the seaport, airport, a natural gas company, all the first-responder departments and other provisions critical to providing the full range of services to citizens. Being able to communicate without obstacles is
extremely important,” says Brenda Kahalley, Communications Manager for City of Pensacola.

The City had been relying on a combination of PBX systems and stand-alone phone lines across the organization, many of which had become outdated or reached end of life. “The PBXs didn’t provide anything close to a unified system and we were spending way too much time on adds, deletes, and moves. What we really needed was a Voice over IP system that would lower our costs and provide capabilities for easier administration and better functionality,” Kahalley continues.

As is the typical procedure for governments, the City sent out a request for proposal to vendors. Key requirements for the VoIP solution included manageability, an easy upgrade path to new technologies, and demonstrated capabilities for an efficient service, support and delivery system for equipment, network and administration.

“We looked at ShoreTel, Cisco, AT&T, and Avaya. Proposals included both hosted and non-hosted solutions. We chose ShoreTel mainly for its lower TCO and product ease of use,” she furthers.

Kahalley designated Verteks Consulting to handle the ShoreTel implementation. Specializing in VoIP systems and computer networking, Verteks is also a ShoreTel Gold Champion Partner with several ShoreTel advanced certified engineers on staff. “Our Verteks team provided the expertise we needed to implement ShoreTel and educate us on how best to take advantage of the components and features—what a great job,” Kahalley calls out.

**Flying Perfect Formation with ShoreTel UC**

The ShoreTel UC Solution selected by the City of Pensacola includes ShoreTel Enterprise Contact Center, more than 600 ShoreTel IP Phones, and 677 ShoreTel licenses to cover 32 locations. ShoreTel is built on a single scalable IP platform with redundant distributed architecture and five-nine availability for mission-critical communications. Intelligent core software delivers voice routing, automated attendant, unified messaging, call accounting and reporting, and important workgroup features. ShoreTel can be easily extended to other properties, regardless of location, for much simpler administration and modular scalability. ShoreTel is managed through a single, Web-based interface, known as ShoreTel Director, and applications can be accessed from anywhere on the network. The outcome is highly reliable, flexible and simplified business communications.

ShoreTel IP Phones were installed for most of the City’s office desks and conference rooms. Crystal-clear audio quality and high-fidelity, full-duplex speakerphones facilitate a new level of clarity for the City’s callers. The City replaced older Polycom phones with ShoreTel conference phones, which include advanced microphone technology, backlit touch color display, haptic feedback, and must-have telephony tools for prompt call management.

The City used ShoreTel Enterprise Contact Center to stand up three contact centers. Designed to capitalize on ShoreTel’s virtual call center technologies, Enterprise Contact Center balances automation and personal attention for better customer service. Contact Center provides a fully integrated business communications system, with universal queuing, enterprise resource matching, and customizable call routing. It also supports email and Web contacts, outbound campaigns, and routing of voicemail and fax to individual email addresses. Agents gain a unified desktop experience with efficiency and easeability at their fingertips, such as screen pops with caller details and presence status of staff.

“We found Contact Center to be so easy to implement. If we need another one, we have that capability readily available to us. And it works seamlessly with our Telrex call recording and monitoring software,” Kahalley mentions.

Having the right business IP platform means easy integration with important applications and environments. ShoreTel has already been integrated with the City’s Microsoft Outlook and Exchange Server environments. The IT department uses Cisco networks and manages VMware virtualization environments. “We use VMware for most of our servers, and are looking at possibly virtualizing our ShoreTel hardware in the future,” she continues.

Brenda Kahalley
Communications Manager
City of Pensacola
The ShoreTel platform is easily integrated with existing virtualization environments, for simpler administration, lower ownership costs, and improved business communications. ShoreTel applications are validated and certified for virtualized deployments.

Creating a New Tradition of Sustainable Cost Efficiencies

Since deploying ShoreTel across its organization, the City of Pensacola has been able to expand some of its services and improve the quality of its communications. “ShoreTel has opened up so many possibilities for us to improve service delivery. The City now has a unified communications system that makes it easier to stay connected, to respond to citizen need, and to maintain a high level of efficiency. We will continue expanding until all City facilities have ShoreTel phones,” Kahalley says.

The IT department purchased ShoreTel Support to ensure the organization runs smoothly with ongoing services to make the most of the ShoreTel system. “We purchased ShoreTel support with flexible pricing plans and an additional 20 percent in savings on maintenance,” she states.

When it comes to benefits that ShoreTel provides, Kahalley had a lot to say. “For us in IT, we have found the ShoreTel UC so much easier to maintain. It’s very easy to deploy new phones on short notice—we can literally do in minutes what used to take hours. And when wiring buildings, we no longer need to provide separate phone and network jacks. For our end users, they now have a more robust system with lots of features to make it easier to provide the best service to our citizens and customers. The integration with Outlook means they can dial numbers directly from their PCs and talk to people without ever touching the phone.”

From a cost savings perspective, the City of Pensacola has seen significant improvements. Kahalley cites reduced operating costs, with fewer PRI lines, no PBX maintenance, a reduction in landlines needed, and the standardization of phone types across the organization. “The City is able to realize a net cost savings per year of $80,000 over our previous phone system operating expenses. The ROI has been greater than we’d estimated because we’ve been able to deploy the ShoreTel system to locations that weren’t able to have network service previously. We’ve greatly expanded the ability to provide service to small offices that couldn’t justify a PBX system in the past. Cutting out single line expenses has also been a significant cost saver.”

When asked what the business communications future holds, Kahalley smiles and says, “With the additional areas we’re expanding with ShoreTel, we expect to save another $10,000 a year by the time we’re done. We have upgraded our network to 10GB and will be considering the 1GB desktop ShoreTel phones in the future. We’ve improved service, quality, costs. We’ve simplified communications for end users, citizens, and administration. It’s all good, real good.”

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