



OFS OPTICS SEES THE VOIP LIGHT

Plagued by high costs during a market downturn, OFS cut spending with ShoreTel's VoIP system.

When the telecom industry turned sour in 2000, OFS Optics was forced to manage costs. The optical fiber manufacturer needed to decrease its operational spending throughout the organization so that it could survive the market's downturn.

When the IT team proposed VoIP as a cost-cutting measure, OFS executive management was hesitant about what was then considered a "bleeding edge technology," but they decided the potential return on investment was too good to ignore. OFS saw a real possibility of slashing the \$40,000 leasing fees it was paying for a Centrix system.

"We figured in the long run we could save a significant amount of money," says Richard Bayersdorfer, Global CIO and director at OFS. After doing their homework on the technology, the IT team forecasted that within one year a VoIP system could return the company's monthly telecom costs.

ASSESSING THE FIELD

With costs savings being paramount on the list of priorities, OFS began reviewing VoIP companies in earnest. OFS investigated Avaya, Nortel and others, but Bayersdorfer described many products in the field as being nothing more than lipstick on a pig.

"We looked at lots of VoIP options," he says. "Many were depending on old technology and architecture that initially looked sexy but once we looked under the hood it was anything but."

Once due diligence was complete, OFS selected the ShoreTel VoIP system. The cost savings definitely played into the decision, but Bayersdorf points out other factors helped seal the deal.

"ShoreTel's flexible, hybrid, scalable solution was a good opportunity for us. As we grow and open new offices, we want a straightforward way to add new users and change their locations. We needed a system that we could maintain and support easily. And we want to some day take advantage of our data lines. We plan to implement teleconferencing across all our locations."

PUTTING SHORETEL TO WORK

At this juncture, OFS has rolled out ShoreTel in its Norcross, GA, headquarters and in its Massachusetts office. ShoreTel has been supporting 300-plus users since late 2003.

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Implementing the ShoreTel technology was very simple, notes Bayersdorfer, for the user community and the IT team. "Our tech folks picked up the new technology quickly and were able to deploy it in about 30 days without the help of a systems integrator or VAR. For the users, we had three training sessions and reviewed all the different features."

The true test for ShoreTel came in the days after implementation. The support team stood at the ready for an increase in calls, but Bayersdorfer says incoming tech support calls didn't receive a visible spike.

From an administration perspective, the ShoreTel phone system is much easier to maintain and support, says Bayersdorfer. "Adding, changing, and deleting users is easier, and we have much better visibility into overall history. The Call Manager gives us a lot of flexibility."

OFS' next steps for ShoreTel are extending the VoIP system across all its locations, four in the United States and three international offices.

"We want to maintain and administer the system locally but push it out to all our locations remotely. We are also considering rolling out VoIP to our Germany office now that ShoreTel has an international office, and we want to pilot the ShoreTel5 conferencing features. We hope to achieve similar ROI in our other locations."

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