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Yorktel Saves a Financial Institution Hundreds of Thousands in Videoconferencing Planning, Implementation Costs

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CUSTOMER PROFILE

In 2012, when Hurricane Sandy hit the Eastern part of the U.S., it forced many companies to rethink their IT strategies, especially as it relates to working outside the traditional four walls of the workplace. This was the case for a large financial institution affected by the devastating storm, says Erick Race, strategic account manager at Yorktel. The company operates facilities, data centers and offices in 16 countries and provides custody and asset servicing for security issues valued at trillions of dollars.

"For several days, workers in its New York facilities had a difficult time getting to work and maintaining their previous levels of productivity," he says. "This event, combined with an aging and proprietary video conference system that was approaching the end of its lifecycle, sparked the company's leaders to start looking for a new solution."

CHALLENGES

Yorktel Experts Uncover Major Building Construction Errors

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"There were a lot of changes happening within the company when we first engaged with them, and a lot of frustration with their legacy videoconferencing system," says Race. "One problem was conference room hijacking, which occurred when a person or group reserved a conference room for a specified period, but their conference extended beyond the allotted time. This meant the next person or group had to either start their conference late or scramble to find another room. Another challenge was the inflexibility of the legacy system. Users could only use the system from a dedicated conference room, and they could only conduct videoconferences with other parties who used the same system. In addition to these challenges, the company was about to begin construction on a 12-story building in Jersey City and wanted videoconferencing system in its new building, too."

Although they did not originally see the need to involve Yorktel in the building project, Yorktel's Professional Services team offered to review the building plans to make sure the new building would be properly prepared for the videoconferencing equipment.

"Almost right away, we detected that there was insufficient conduit spec'd for the project and the conduit recommended by their building project manager was undersized," says Race. "Considering that the conduit was to be run in the walls and in the floors, it would have created significant problems if the error had not been caught ahead of time. The A/V project alone was already going to cost the financial services company $5.5 million in new equipment, infrastructure, software and services. By catching the building contractor's errors, we saved them hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional rework costs, which would have also delayed their expected completion time by several months. In addition to ensuring they had the right size and amount of conduit for microphone wires, speaker wires, control cabling and other wiring, we educated them about effective use of room acoustics, lighting and color."

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SOLUTION & RESULTS

Yorktel Solves Cisco, Microsoft Incompatibility Hiccup

Yorktel's team implemented Cisco Telepresence solutions in 130+ spaces, including conference rooms, training areas, and message display areas located throughout the new building, and it added managed services and support to the project as well. Yorktel built a $900,000 professional studio for the customer, too, which is used for internal marketing and live televised interviews. The project also entailed outfitting the company's hallways and other designated areas throughout the building with digital signage displays.

"We provide endpoint monitoring and support services from our video NOC, which detects and troubleshoots problems ranging from video packet jitter to video equipment problems," says Race. "This was important to them because neither their A/V team nor IT department had the resources or experience to take on that responsibility, and it is an area we specialize in. Besides providing them with remote monitoring and support, we have three Yorktel engineers on site each day to ensure any equipment or connection issues are addressed and remediated right away."

One obstacle that presented itself during the implementation was a lack of interoperability between the Cisco video conferencing system and the customer's Lync (now called Skype for Business) bridge. "We quickly began researching and comparing collaboration platforms and selected Acano [which was later acquired by Cisco], which resolved the issue without requiring any equipment changes to the project," says Race.

Although the company originally considered having Yorktel manage each conference room to ensure meetings started and ended on time, it turned out to be unnecessary. "Besides having more dedicated conference rooms than they had previously, the company now has more flexibility, too," says Race. "For instance, a number of conferences involving one or two employees can be conducted from an employee's desktop. Some of the single-person conferences may even take place via a smartphone or desktop video device — and conferences no longer have to be restricted to within the building."

Since completing this project, which was nearly three years ago now, the customer has continued to grow and has added new locations in Florida, Texas and three other countries, says Race. "When we first started working with them they had 143 videoconferencing end points, and today they have close to 240 end points that we are managing for them. Additionally, in 2013 they were using 5,300 total ISDN hours a month and today that number has dropped by nearly 98 percent to only 110 ISDN hours per month. More recently, they acquired a company with five locations that was using a legacy Polycom videoconferencing system, and that will likely lead to the need for additional videoconferencing end points and upgrades in the near future."

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