

## UC Case Study

# Hosted VoIP makes scaling and managing phone system easy

*The Travel Team provides corporate and executive leisure travel services as well as meeting and event management for small businesses to Fortune 500 organizations. Its roughly 100 employees are spread across eight offices in the U.S. and Canada.*

### SITUATION

Growth is generally a good thing. But it rarely comes without some pain. That was certainly the case for The Travel Team. As the company expanded beyond its Buffalo, New York headquarters into additional locations in New York, Pennsylvania, Florida and Canada, internal communications between offices had become more challenging.

For example, having individual PBXs in each location made it difficult to transfer calls from the contact center to a sales office. It also meant that the IT department had to maintain multiple phone systems from multiple providers.

“Our phones had some basic VoIP capabilities, but having come from a Cisco Gold Partner myself I knew there was much more we could be doing with them,” says Joel Cristall, VP of strategic technology at The Travel Team. “I could also see how having a full VoIP system in place would improve performance in the contact center and allow us to build our teams based on skillsets rather than geography.”

Knowing the amount of management a company-wide VoIP phone installation would require, Cristall determined the best option would be to move to a hosted VoIP solution that provided flexibility for each office with centralized management. He also wanted the hosting company to be able to manage The Travel Team’s data connections.

### SOLUTION

After reviewing several potential providers, Cristall engaged West IP Communications, a Cisco-Powered Managed Unified Communications solution provider. The solution provider was already working with several travel management companies, so Cristall felt comfortable that the company understood the industry’s nuances.

West IPC recommended moving all network and voice traffic onto a managed MPLS network the provider would host, using Cisco 2800 series routers and 3500 series power over ethernet switches. West IPC Intelligent Call Control (ICC) hosted contact center platform was installed to improve contact center performance and reporting functions. It also brought full UC functionality to the Cisco 7900 series phones, including four-digit internal dialing, visual voicemail, voicemail to email, “meet me” conferencing and other capabilities.

### RESULTS

Cristall says the move to West IPC hosted VoIP has definitely accomplished what he wanted in terms of relieving the IT burden.

“It’s remarkable,” he says. “Before, I was very fragmented. I had seven different vendors in different locations just for the phones, each with its own variation in the contracts and support structure. Now I have one place to go, one team to talk to when there are problems.”



It has also made a considerable difference on the business side. For example, in the past client teams were built based on geography.

“You tried to figure out who in the office would be best for a particular job,” Cristall says. “Today, teams are being built based on skillset requirements – regardless of where they’re located. It has helped us enhance our level of customer service even more.”

Having full VoIP and UC capabilities has helped The Travel Team attract highly sought talent in the competitive world of travel management by creating greater flexibility. Account executives and contact center agents don’t have to live near an office to be hired; others can work outside the office when necessary. That same flexibility and location independence has allowed the company to expand its availability to clients beyond the typical 8 to 5 East Coast timeframe.

Cristall says ICC has greatly improved reporting in the contact center. The Travel Team now has greater insight into the performance of individual agents, which helps it meet service level agreements while also helping it make more informed scheduling, training, forecasting and operational decisions.

Overall, he is very happy with the performance of the products, and with West IPC. “When I visited their operation and started a dialogue with people I felt very comfortable,” Cristall say. “They had the right balance of engineers, support staff, and expertise in our area. Lots of follow-up too. I appreciate that.”