



Industry: Manufacturing

Installation: 6 Locations, 400 ShorePhone IP Phones, 11 ShoreGear Voice Switches

Competition: Avaya

Date of Install: 2005



Challenge:

In 2004, Liberty Hardware (part of the MASCO family), which spans the United States, the United Kingdom, and China, had a mix of telephone systems and was in the midst of an initiative to improve internal communications. A new, more feature-rich phone system was needed.

Solution:

ShoreTel provided Liberty Hardware with an end-to-end VoIP system, including 11 ShoreGear voice switches and 400 ShorePhone IP telephones, which integrated easily with some existing telephone components to maximize corporate assets.

Benefits:

- Liberty Hardware saves over \$211,000 annually on maintenance, management and toll charges with the new ShoreTel system.
- Liberty employees enjoy productivity-enhancing features that allow them to provide better customer service and maximize their time.
- ShoreTel system can be easily managed in-house, which saves time and money.
- ShoreTel integrates seamlessly with Liberty Hardware's customized call center applications.

LIBERTY HARDWARE SWITCHES TO SHORETEL VOIP

ShoreTel Saves Money, Simplifies System Management and Enhances Call Center for Leading Hardware Manufacturer

Since 1942, Liberty Hardware Manufacturing Corporation has offered high-quality decorative and functional hardware products through fine retail outlets and original equipment manufacturer (OEM) distribution channels across the United States. The company has its headquarters in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and other office and distribution facilities in New Jersey, California, the United Kingdom, and China.

COMMUNICATIONS IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE

In late 2004, Liberty Hardware embarked on an initiative to improve internal communications between all of its worldwide locations. The company needed to do some in-depth analysis on call volume in order to continually improve its call center operations and make changes that would maximize budget. Its existing telephone system, built on solutions from different vendors, including Avaya and Centrex, did not allow for the comprehensive analysis Liberty needed to do, and it was also cumbersome and costly to manage.

MAKING THE SWITCH

Liberty decided Voice over IP (VoIP) was the way to go and considered new systems from Avaya, Cisco and ShoreTel. After thoroughly researching solutions, talking to customer references, and testing products right in their own network, Liberty chose ShoreTel, citing ease of administration, cost-effectiveness, and architecture flexibility as the top reasons for its choice.

“ShoreTel met our business requirements at a fraction of the budget we had planned,” said Scott Zipp, Liberty Hardware’s Senior Manager of Network Services. “The ease of administration is unbelievable. You can manage every system, including remote sites, so easily. For example, changing the greeting can be done once and every site is updated automatically. Before, we had to go into each system and change it, which did not allow for uniformity and was time-consuming.”

In addition to appreciating the ease of administration and cost-effectiveness, the flexibility of the system was a plus for Liberty because they could have the benefits of the system at its smaller sites without needing an expensive system at each location.

“One of our offices is very small and serves just a few people,” said Cora Whitley, network engineer for Liberty Hardware. “With ShoreTel, we didn’t



need a full-blown phone system for that location. We simply put a smaller ShoreGear switch in there with a couple of analog lines. Another system would have been much more expensive.”

Liberty Hardware worked with ShoreTel’s channel partner, based in Charlotte, North Carolina, to deploy the new phone system. The partner provided Liberty with eleven ShoreGear™ T1 Voice Switches: five for its headquarters in North Carolina, one for its New Jersey location, two for California and two for its UK facility; a ShoreGear-40/8 voice switch was also deployed in Liberty’s small remote office. In terms of telephones, Liberty has deployed 200 ShorePhone IP 210 telephones and another 200 ShorePhone IP 530 telephones. The ShoreTel system provided Liberty Hardware with the flexibility to implement the new system in a phased approach from their existing Avaya and NEC phone systems to the new ShoreTel system.

TREMENDOUS COST SAVINGS

Liberty Hardware has performed in-depth cost calculations and the company estimates that it will have saved over \$211,000 in the first year of having its ShoreTel system in place. These savings include maintenance, toll charges, and management (moves, adds, and changes). “We estimate the ShoreTel system will have paid for itself in just over a year, which is a terrific return on investment,” said Zipp.

Furthermore, with the ShoreTel system in place, all 500 Liberty Hardware employees worldwide are now on the same phone and voice mail system, able to reach any employee at any location via 4-digit dialing and even dialing co-workers by name. Least-cost routing capabilities also allow Liberty to minimize costs by avoiding toll charges. For instance, if an employee in the main office in North Carolina calls a customer in California, the call is routed through the company’s data lines, through the Ontario, California office and out to the customer, thus bypassing toll charges.

“With ShoreTel, we get the simplicity of four-digit dialing to reach co-workers and the cost savings of least-cost routing, which has improved our internal communications significantly,” said Whitley. “People are more inclined to communicate more regularly now, and not worry about long distance charges.”

MANAGEMENT SIMPLIFIED

For Liberty, one of the most important factors in its decision to go with ShoreTel was ease of administration. Liberty uses ShoreTel’s ShoreWare Director, a browser-based management interface that allows a network administrator to launch a Web browser and gain access to ShoreWare Director from anywhere on the network. Through the browser, Liberty Hardware can manage every site, including voice mail, automated attendant and desktop applications. In order to add a new user, a system administrator only needs to click “add new” and enter the user’s name, which automatically updates the centralized database and every voice switch. Once the new user is added, a mailbox is created, the automated attendant dial-by-name and number feature is updated, and online directories are revised. The entire process takes just a few seconds. The administration of moves and changes is just as simple and can even be done remotely.

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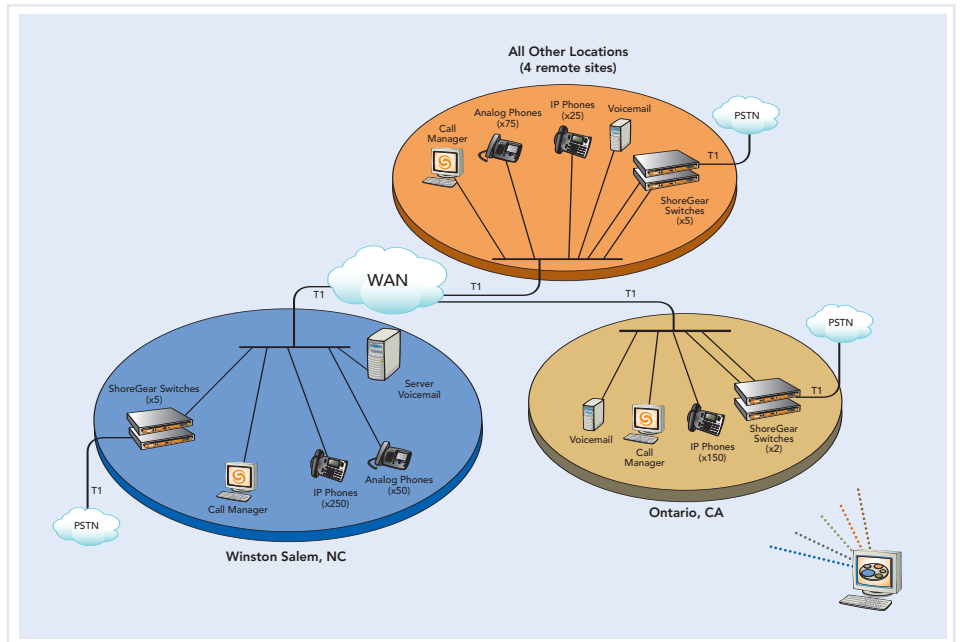


ENHANCED PRODUCTIVITY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Integrated directly with Microsoft Outlook, the ShoreTel system provides employees with integrated messaging, such as directory dialing, contact screen pop, and calendar integration. ShoreWare Personal Call Manager gives employees the equivalent of a desktop PBX—a powerful, all-purpose tool for managing voice communications. With it, Liberty Hardware employees can quickly browse contacts and make calls from local directories or from Microsoft Outlook. Its friendly, graphical interface provides easy access to sophisticated features, including on-the-fly conferencing and document sharing. Voice mail messages are stored in the industry-standard WAV Audio for Windows format, allowing users to play them on multimedia PCs, attach them to e-mail messages or embed them in other documents. The ability of the ShoreTel system to track customer phone calls and export and distribute voice mails as WAV files is helpful in continually monitoring and improving customer service.

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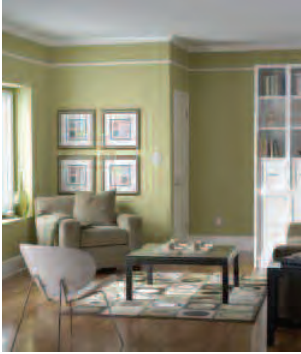


Liberty Hardware deployed ShoreTel to 6 locations with 400 ShorePhone IP telephones.

Liberty Hardware’s operator enjoys a high level of functionality with ShoreTel’s Operator Call Manager, which provides critical information necessary for exceptional customer service. “Our operator loves the new ShoreTel system,” said Whitley. “She can transfer calls without having to memorize every extension and cell phone number—it’s a simple drag-and-drop. Now, she’s able to focus on more HR functions than she had been able to in the past because her phone system is so much more effective.”

NO CALL LEFT UNANSWERED

Liberty utilizes ShoreTel’s Hunt Groups capability, which makes certain that all calls are answered by a live person rather than voice mail. With Hunt Groups, a call into Liberty Hardware rings extensions in a specified sequence or rings multiple extensions at once (depending on Liberty’s preference),



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ensuring callers reach the person they need without navigating through menus or being forced to wait in a queue.

CALL CENTER OPTIMIZED

With ShoreTel, Liberty’s 20 call center agents are armed with key information and control, enabling a significantly higher level of personalized attention for callers. For example, before even answering an incoming call, a call-routing log displays the caller’s experience within the system to a call center operator so he or she has the information necessary to make the caller’s experience as pleasant as possible. ShoreTel also provides advanced real-time management and historical measurement tools that enable Liberty Hardware supervisors to ensure agents are delivering consistent service. Performance and statistical information lets the company know how the center is performing and what needs to be done for further improvement. Finally, Liberty can easily cross-train call center agents, allowing trainees to listen in on the ShoreTel system and learn from other agents, whether the training agent sits in California or the United Kingdom.

“With all of the different time zones of our offices, ShoreTel has simplified and improved our call center operations,” said Whitley. “We can leverage time zones and direct calls between certain hours to certain locations, thereby extending our call center capabilities.”

Liberty recently developed an application that has been integrated into its call center and ShoreTel is part of the integration. Built on a .NET platform, Liberty’s call center application allows agents to take notes during a call and enter them directly into the system, so when a customer calls back, those notes appear for the person answering the subsequent call. Built on an SQL server database with a Web-based front end, the application works through the ShoreTel system, which in turn “pops” up a window for the agent to take the notes. Pertinent information is culled from the call (including caller ID) and populates the database for future reference.

“After we implemented the ShoreTel system, we received many compliments from customers about our customer service,” said Whitley. “Our internal employees also appreciate all of the capabilities, including the ability to route calls to certain numbers—like their cell phones—so they can work from wherever they need to.”

PERSONALIZED ATTENTION = LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP

Whitley appreciates the dedication and expertise of both ShoreTel and their local resellers’ representatives. “In addition to helping us with the deployment and the application integration for our call center, we get tremendous support whenever we need it,” said Whitley. “For example, I called ShoreTel’s reseller in the middle of the night when I was bringing our England office online, and I got excellent support. I can only call other vendors within specific hours. We’re very happy with our decision to go with ShoreTel and look forward to continued enhancements to our phone system.”