



The City of Lodi Selects a Powerful, New Communications Solution

A Communication Strategies Client Case Study

Background

The City of Lodi was using an aging legacy Nortel PBX and contact center that had reached the end of manufacturer support. A new solution was needed to serve approximately 500 stations across 15 city locations, supporting vital city services such as police, fire, library, utilities and public works.

Prior to investigating a new communications platform, the City had invested in a redundant, self-healing and hardened private metropolitan area network (MAN). The MAN is constructed on city-owned single mode fiber facilities, microwave connections and copper T1s. The City also installed a bi-directional SONET network over multistrand fiber that connected most of their locations through their own right of way.

With limited staffing and a highly reliable data network, the City's team decided to look at a cloud solution for their future and not a "box in the basement".

To help them assess their environment and technology options, the City of Lodi secured the expertise and technology consulting services of Communication Strategies (Com-Strat).

The Project

The Com-Strat team was originally hired in early 2018. The relationship continued to build as the firm proved their value through development of an RFP culminating in the City's selection of a vendor that fit their objectives.

The City of Lodi desired a solution that would provide a robust and reliable unified communications (UC) and contact center (CC) platform for all its employees.

City of Lodi's Requirements

- Was easy to scale and manage without comprehensive or expensive formal
- Had system administration functions that were intuitive, easy to use and web
- Supported increased employee productivity and
- Provided enhanced mobility
- Delivered robust contact center features at an affordable price.

The Process

Benjamin Buecher, the City's Information Technology Manager for the past 6 years, assembled a team of departmental representatives that were knowledgeable on their department requirements and remained engaged throughout the process. The City released a request for proposal (RFP) that resulted in the receipt of thirteen vendor responses. The City team and Com-Strat evaluated all bids for compliance with their key stated priorities and selected the top four proposals to continue to the next phase of the process. The finalists, Avaya, 8X8, and Mitel with two separate offerings, MiVoice Business and Mitel Connect, were invited to provide a system demonstration and executive overview to the City of Lodi team.

Once the demonstrations were complete, 8x8, represented by Vertical Communications, was invited to participate in a proof of concept (POC) pilot implementation for 30 days. Vertical Communications proved to be a great partner. The Vertical team members knew what to do and executed well. They were knowledgeable, flexible and adjusted to meet the City of Lodi's changing project timeline.

With the POC was complete, the City signed contracts and moved to implementation. The City adopted a phased rollout, with half of the City staying on the legacy Avaya system while the other half migrated to the new 8x8 platform. Substantial work was done in advance to provide temporary extensions and direct dial numbers (DIDs) until a completely new numbering scheme was achieved and old DID numbers could be ported to the new platform. In looking back, Ben believes that success was achieved throughout the process because he knew he could always hand things off to Lloyd Halvorsen, his Com-Strat consultant, and Lloyd would run with it.



Meet Communication Strategies

Communication Strategies is a comprehensive voice and IT technology consulting services firm.

- Technology Consulting
- Project Management
- Disaster Recovery
- Business Continuity
- Resilience
- Contact Center Design
- Expense Management
- Systems Assessment
- VoIP
- Strategic Planning
- Converged Voice and Data
- Wide Area Networks
- Co-location facility planning
- IT Infrastructure
- Unified Communications
- Presence Integration
- Vendor / Carrier Negotiations
- Microsoft Lync

The Result

Ben worked diligently to assure that the new communication platform substantially changed the way employees work and feed back has been very positive. Since completion, there have been no voice quality issues even though they elected to deploy “over the top” on existing internet circuits.

Instant messaging features and functionality have been quickly adopted and email use has been reduced. Many City staff members, including the City Manager, no longer see the need for a desk phone. Fax machines have been integrated using analog telephone adapters (ATA) and are now part of the cloud solution. Some of the direct station selection (DSS) button boxes were no longer needed. The management team is using 8×8 Meet more than was expected.

Supporting a planned pandemic shut down during March 2020, Ben noted that the cloud strategy paid off during the push to spin up and implement remote teleworking quickly and seamlessly. The only wish still on Ben’s list: could the system screen more of his calls?

“Communication Strategies has been a champion from the beginning. Heritage is very lucky to have you helping us through this.”

– Larry St. Regis
Heritage Bank of Commerce.

“Communication Strategies was instrumental in creating a solution for connectivity to our retail stores to improve our operations.”

– Ed Wong
Charlotte Russe

“The collocation RFP developed by Communication Strategies was one of the best and most comprehensive I’ve ever seen!”

– Rick Moreno
Sheppard, Mullin,
Richter & Hampton, LLP

Get In Contact

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