



A LESSON IN PHONE TECHNOLOGY PAYS OFF FOR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CUSTOMER:

Established in 1897, Angleton Independent School District (AISD) provides a quality education experience for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, special education programs for pre-school and school-age children and a career and technology education program at the secondary level. The district is made up of about 6,800 students on 10 instructional campuses, with three non-instructional buildings which include administration, transportation and maintenance & food service.

SITUATION:

The district began with an analog Nortel business phone system, which was costly in terms of POTS lines and technical support. AISD developed strong relationships with the Nortel technicians, and when industry changes occurred, and a few technicians migrated to Layer 3 Communications, AISD followed them. "When they decided to leave Nortel and join Layer 3 Communications, we didn't want to discontinue our relationship with them; we quickly became a Layer 3 Communications customer," said Jeff Stout, Director of Technology for AISD.

They were happy with Nortel's quality, but they needed to upgrade the technology. Layer 3 Communications suggested a switch to VoIP and the cost savings it would bring, but AISD wasn't quite convinced it

would be a money-saver. They did, however, have a high demand for productivity-enhancing features and functionality their existing phone system lacked. This included voice mail, call transfer, call forwarding and 4-digit dialing.

CHALLENGE:

Several years later, the district built a new high school. Stout and his team thought this would be a good time to make a technology change, so they switched to VoIP for the new high school and three administrative buildings. The rest of the campuses remained analog with the existing phone system. Once VoIP was installed, they started to realize the cost benefits of having a digital phone system, and developed a plan to upgrade the remaining campuses.

ISD was paying around \$5,000 a month to AT&T for the POTS lines. They were also spending a significant amount of money on support, including every time they needed to add an extension or move a handset. Their analog phone system was almost 20 years old, and teachers and administrators were living without modern phone features like call transfer and voicemail. "We had gone well beyond the useful life of our old system," remarked Stout. "Once we got budget approval, we gave Layer 3 Communications the go ahead to bring our system up to current phone technology," he added.

“With the old system, you had to be a phone expert in order to effectively manage and maintain it. With ShoreTel, you gain back your independence.” — Stout

SOLUTION:

Layer 3 Communications discussed a number of phone system options with AISD, with ShoreTel being one of them. A ShoreTel VoIP business phone system became the favorite for a few reasons:

- **Fast Implementation** Deployment and set up is surprisingly simple!
- **Complete Flexibility** It's designed to be intuitive, so users require little training regardless of technical skills.
- **Easy to Manage** Adds and changes are easy to perform – no need to contact a service technician.
- **Confidence and Security** With VoIP, users no longer worry about downtime due to system failures; and the system is designed for scalability.

Layer 3 Communications installed 900 handsets in 16 locations. “We had some concerns because our teachers had been used to the analog phone system,” said Stout. “But it was a pain-free process; they didn’t really have any complaints,” he added. When they compared the time and money spent with the old system on installs, maintenance and minor problems along the way,

it was too costly to maintain. The ShoreTel system allows them much more control internally and they can perform simple adds, moves and changes on their own.

RESULTS:

The biggest improvement was 4-digit dialing and saving nearly \$3500/month by switching to VoIP and eliminating most of their POTS lines. “The ShoreTel phone system helped us become more efficient; now we have better control of the system itself,” said Stout.

Since then, Layer 3 Communications has performed two network security upgrades and two voice upgrades for AISD, with the next big step being the addition of emergency notification and mobility. “If we had to do it all over again, we’d still choose Layer 3 Communications and ShoreTel,” remarked Stout. “With the old system, you had to be a phone expert to effectively manage and maintain it,” said Stout. “With ShoreTel, you gain back your independence.”

AISD has recommended Layer 3 Communications to several neighboring schools, which says a lot about the level of trust they developed between the two companies. “They have a good team at Layer 3,” said Stout. “Not just in terms of technical expertise, but they are good people. We share the same work ethic and integrity.”

Are you looking to reduce costs in your organization?

Consider a switch to VoIP and drastically reduce your monthly phone bill. We'll help you develop a communications strategy to save you money, and boost employee effectiveness.

Contact us today to get started.

