
CODE BLUE: HOW ONE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER RECOVERED FROM A PAINFUL EXPERIENCE

CUSTOMER:

SouthCoast Health provides easy access to top quality care through a comprehensive network of 130 physicians and medical professionals in 19 locations across parts of coastal South Carolina and Georgia. They have 900 employees, of which approximately 20% are remote users.

SITUATION:

SouthCoast faced several challenges with their previous service provider who was handling the phone and voice and data systems. At peak times, their network would completely shut down; this meant patient admissions were delayed, phone calls were dropped or 'jittery' and the network had no redundancy, making it difficult to adequately serve customers and conduct business. For Harvey Knowles, IT Manager at SouthCoast Health, this was a serious issue. "The network downtime we were experiencing became much more than just an inconvenience," said Knowles. "We were impacting customer service, our reputation and the ability to operate on a satisfactory level."

Knowles needed a provider who could produce thorough, quality work, and meet their expectations for quality and service. Because of the instability of their

phone system and data network, and their vendor's inability to resolve their issues, Knowles knew it was time to make a change. Since they already made a substantial investment in equipment and their network, Knowles decided to contact Layer 3 Communications for help.

CHALLENGE:

Their old network lacked proper segmentation for voice traffic. It also lacked any redundancy and fault tolerance, so withstanding failures crippled the network. To course correct, they needed a better understanding of how their network was set up, and how to eliminate the problems.

They were also operating with a variety of different phone systems. The mix of equipment made it difficult to provide reliable service, and they lacked modern phone system features. In terms of interoffice communications, they weren't able to easily transfer calls, utilize 4-digit interoffice dialing, or take advantage of other leading edge features.

Many of their offices use ShoreTel phone systems, and the experience has been a positive one. Based on this history, they agreed to standardize on ShoreTel as upgrades were needed or new locations were added.

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SOLUTION:

Layer 3 Communications began with a network assessment that provided a detailed map of the network, traffic flow, and identified weaknesses or vulnerabilities in the design and/or configuration. Once the assessment was performed, it was determined that SouthCoast needed an overhaul of their entire network. Layer 3 mapped out a new VoIP network and created a Quality of Service (QoS) for them. QoS enables the prioritization of latency sensitive traffic like voice, and prevents call quality issues.

Developing a QoS improved the user experience by managing traffic (bandwidth) based on priorities for each of the applications they use to conduct business (printing, phone calls, video conference, internet usage, etc.). Their QoS created a 'traffic pattern' to eliminate the need to fight for workload bandwidth (i.e., holding a video conference session while someone is sending a large document to the printer). This meant they would no longer experience buffering, lag time, dropped calls and jitter and because they were properly allocating usage.

RESULTS:

SouthCoast Health is very pleased with the performance of their ShoreTel network, and ability to efficiently serve their customers is no longer a worry. "From a network operation and support standpoint,

it's so much better, and much more stable," said Knowles. "We had a lot of downtime before; if it happens now it's rare and we understand why it's happening," he added.

Once Layer 3 Communications set up an efficient call flow for the organization, productivity increased and customer satisfaction levels were where they needed to be. At that point Knowles realized the benefit gained by working with a provider who understands how to build a network based on company usage. "Once Layer 3 Communications established a QoS for us, our network operation and call quality issues became a thing of the past," said Knowles.

The next phase is a gradual move to the cloud, possibly using a hybrid solution which offers the independence and control of a premise system, with the flexibility and security of cloud. Disaster recovery is a concern; the ability to bounce back from a local outage with minimal impact to the entire organization is critical for them. "We've always been happy with the ShoreTel solution," said Knowles. "The flexibility and scalability of the system gives us peace of mind. For us, ShoreTel is here to stay."

Are you looking to reduce costs in your organization?

It may be time for a change.

Explore your options and **Contact us today for a free, no-obligation consultation**

