AIRSHIP VENTURES

CASE STUDY   ASTERISK IP-PBX

OVERVIEW

Airship Ventures is a privately owned company formed in 2007 with the objective of bringing Zeppelin NT airships to the United States for commercial air tours, media and advertising operations, scientific research, and special missions. The Airship Ventures Zeppelin is the largest airship in the world, and was manufactured in Germany. Initially based with one Zeppelin in the Bay Area, the company plans to eventually have a number of airships operating throughout the USA.

The company has its base operations at NASA's Ames Research Center at Moffet Field in Mountain View, California. Using part of historic Hangar 2, built in 1942 to house U.S. Navy blimps, Airship Ventures also has a temporary office at a former military building at Moffett.

Company Responsible for Bringing Zeppelin Airships to the USA Find Themselves Flying High

CHALLENGE

Airship Ventures approached Jerry Brady with Blue Circle Technologies to establish their office infrastructure, which needed to be put together quickly and inexpensively to get their office up and running. With many employees working remotely or traveling abroad, the system needed to present a unified phone system for the company regardless of the employee's location.

SOLUTION

Brady was familiar with Asterisk, having worked with it before, and knew its capabilities. Additionally Brian Hall, president of Airship Ventures, had worked with Asterisk previously as the CEO and founder of Mark/Space, a developer of cutting-edge wired and wireless synchronization software products. With Asterisk, Mark/Space went from three to 30 phone extensions while still using the same phone system.

IMPLEMENTATION

In January of 2008, Brady downloaded the Asterisk 1.4.17 software. Along with Asterisk, Airship used a Digium TDM800P 8-port card in the server and Polycom handsets. They currently have 15 phones that are registered with the server, with about 11 being desk sets, a conference room phone, and a few unassigned extensions. Some of the features that Asterisk provides Airship are Meet Me, voice mail, and call forwarding.

Brady commented on Asterisk's simple and easy implementation. He said, "As an IT consultant, I like Asterisk because I can make it do whatever I need to do and I don't have to spend any more than just rolling up my sleeves and doing a little bit of work." He also went on to say that the Asterisk-based system allows him to quickly add new phone extensions so that new employees can start working immediately. "I'll sometimes get a request for three new people starting that morning, and five minutes later, they'll have an e-mail from me saying their phone extensions are set up and running," Brady said.

RESULTS

An advantage that Airship Ventures has found from flexible and easy-to-use Asterisk is the ability to be "picked up and moved" when the company relocates into a new building, set to occur in the fall of 2008. Additionally, with Brian Hall heading two companies, he finds satisfaction that Asterisk can provide him with the use of one phone that is registered to both servers. The phone alerts him which company the caller intends to contact as the call comes in. The Airship implementation has exemplified how Asterisk is easy to use, inexpensive, and flexible.

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