

PIONEER ELECTRONICS AUSTRALIA



CASE STUDY

SWITCHVOX

OVERVIEW

Pioneer Electronics Australia is a leading consumer electronics business well known for its car and home entertainment equipment. The Pioneer Corporation began in Japan as an audio products manufacturer in 1938. Today it employs more than 38,000 staff worldwide and is listed on the New York Stock Exchange, Euronext Amsterdam, Tokyo Stock Exchange and Osaka Securities Exchange.

In Australia, Pioneer Electronics is headquartered in Melbourne and operates five very busy call centres for its customer service centre and sales support from its Heatherton office.

Pioneer’s ageing, unreliable telephone system was disconnecting customer phone calls. They needed to streamline and manage its call centres as well as address customers’ frustration.

CHALLENGE

Pioneer was using an ageing telephone system that was unreliable and regularly disconnecting customer phone calls, and needed a solution that would streamline and manage its call centres effectively while dramatically reducing the number of dropped customer calls to address customers’ frustration.

Effectively managing its call centres is a business critical operation for Pioneer Electronics.



John Janetzki, IT Manager, Pioneer Electronics, said, “Pioneer’s only direct customer contact Australia-wide is through its call centres, so it’s essential that the phone system operates without any hassles.

“We speak with retailers of our products, provide service and place orders for our sales team and offer direct product support to our consumers — all over the phone.”

Pioneer receives more than 2,400 incoming phone calls per week with a total of 4,100 calls inbound and outbound. It was managing these phone calls with an ageing business telephone system, which was proving unreliable and regularly disconnecting customer phone calls.

Janetzki said, “With our old telephone system, we had a problem where over half our calls were accidentally disconnected once customers selected an initial option from our interactive voice response (IVR) answering system.

“This meant customers had to call back and go through the process again, before they had even spoken to a person. By the time they reached a staff member, they were already annoyed or angry. Not to mention, it was also frustrating for our call centre staff who constantly had to apologise for our system not working properly.”

The old system was also hard to administer for the IT department.

Janetzki said, “Our vendor was based offshore and we really struggled to get the product support we needed, which was causing grief on a daily basis, with administrative changes to the system taking far too long. As an example, it took more than five minutes just to login to the admin software before I could even make a change.”

The ageing system wasn't supporting this essential part of the business and was proving counter-productive for staff. Pioneer needed a way to streamline and manage its call centres effectively while dramatically reducing the number of dropped customer calls to address their customers' frustration.

SOLUTION

Pioneer knew it needed to introduce a new communications solution to address these issues and looked to its trusted IT partner, Intellect IT, to help.

Intellect IT recommended a voice over IP (VoIP) unified communications solution that streamlined Pioneer's call centre operations delivering superior call handling features easily managed through a web interface.

Stephen Allen, Director, Intellect IT, said, “Intellect IT has worked with Pioneer for more than three years. After reviewing Pioneer's requirements, Intellect IT knew it could introduce a new, reliable unified communications phone system.”

Intellect IT recommended Digium Switchvox as the best solution to address Pioneer's needs.

Switchvox is a pure IP PBX, letting Pioneer integrate the phone system partially or totally to its data network. The Switchvox platform delivers advanced functionality including conference bridging, call recording, call queues, (IVR functionality and a full suite of unified communications features.

The implementation included one AA355 Switchvox server located in its Melbourne headquarters. There are approximately 95 SIP handsets operational across Pioneers's call centres and offices, which are connected to the system.

Allen said, “Switchvox IP PBXs deliver integrated unified communications as part of its standard platform. Intellect IT was able to offer an all-in-one solution to Pioneer that was straight forward to implement, easy to manage and cost effective.”

Intellect IT worked with Pioneer to implement the new system over the weekend to eliminate any downtime.

Allen said, “Pioneer was relocating its office, so it was an opportune time to transition to a new system without impacting the day-to-day business. We were able to plan ahead with access to the new office location a week in advance of moving. This planning meant we were ready to shut down the old phone system on the Friday evening and be up and running with the new Switchvox system for start of business Monday morning.”

Another important consideration for Pioneer was the cost of the new solution. Intellect IT was able to recommend a solution appropriate for Pioneer’s business size and feature requirements.

Janetzki said, “We didn’t have a huge budget and knew we needed a straight-forward system. One of the great things about the Switchvox solution is that it’s an all-in-one business phone system, so we didn’t need to pay for expensive add-ons or additional configuration fees.”

RESULT

Since the new system has been in place from May 2010, Pioneer has eliminated its dropped call issue.

Janetzki said, “It’s fantastic to have a telephone system that just works. As well as no longer frustrating our customers with disconnected calls, we’re also receiving positive feedback on some of the new features.

“We now have the ability to let callers know their place number in the queue – it is features like this that are proving popular with our customers.”

Leveraging the IVR feature on the Switchvox provides Pioneer with an effective way for its call centres to provide better customer service. It means that when the caller reaches a customer service operator they are already aware of the individual needs of the customer resulting in more efficient and faster response times.

The new system was intuitive for Pioneer’s staff to learn. All it took was a quick 10 minute training demonstration and staff were up and running when the new system went live.

Janetzki said, “Our staff are also benefiting. They can now listen to voicemail messages through their email, saving time and improving response rates, and we have the ability to page everyone in the office at the same time.”

Pioneer is able to actively manage the unified communication system internally, without having to outsource routine operations, which also means lower total cost of ownership. The Switchvox system has a simple point and click web interface through which staff manage their own telephony needs including change of name, email addresses, call forward, and time of day rules. This has resulted in improved performance and customer satisfaction.

“We have tangibly improved everyday communications for our business. It’s certainly making my life easier – I can even log on to the system when I’m out of the office and quickly make changes on the go,” concluded Janetzki .

Since the new system was introduced, Pioneer has also simplified its call flow structure and has the option to easily expand to add more users or functionality.

ABOUT INTELLECT IT

Founded in 1998, Intellect Information Technology is a customer-oriented IT integration and support company. Intellect IT offers a range of IT design, implementation and support services including voice and data communications, network design, systems integration, disaster recovery, business continuity and preventative maintenance and reactive support.

ABOUT WAVELINK

Wavelink (www.wavelink.com.au) specialises in the supply, marketing and support of a range of leading edge business IP, wireless, communication and network security and access solutions. Wavelink distributes a range of products from Digium, Polycom, Meru Networks, Cisco, AirTight, Nomadix and Bradford Networks.



ABOUT DIGIUM

Digium, Inc., the Asterisk Company, created, owns and is the innovative force behind Asterisk, the most widely used open source telephony software. Since its founding in 1999, Digium has become the open source alternative to proprietary communication providers, with offerings that cost as much as 80 percent less. Digium offers Asterisk software free to the open source community and offers Asterisk Business Edition and Switchvox IP PBX software to power a broad family of products for small, medium and large businesses. The company's product line includes a wide range of hardware and software to enable resellers and customers to implement turnkey VoIP systems or to design their own custom telephony solutions.

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