

Challenge

Aurora Enterprises needed a fully featured, affordable Unified Communications solution that would eliminate any delays in critical communications between engineers and their clients and between the US offices and offices in India. They did not want to risk losing business because of slow responses to proposal requests, troubleshooting calls, and other client communications. They also wanted a more sophisticated telecommunications presence so they could compete or partner with large, well-equipped companies.

Solution

Avaya IP Office 500; Avaya digital phones and Avaya IP phones.

Value Created

- Productivity increases
- Rapid return on investment and savings on overall cost of ownership
- Increased revenue generation
- The ability to receive customer calls, e-mails, and faxes anytime, anywhere – avoiding the risk of losing a customer because of delayed service
- Speed of collaboration between offices in the US and back-office functions in India, to speed up proposals and services to clients
- Scalability and reliability
- Strong competitive advantage

A leading data security firm accelerates responses to customers and streamlines operations with Avaya IP Office

Torrance, California—When Philip de Souza founded Aurora Enterprises in 1992 he did so *“with just myself, a toolbox, and a commitment to outstanding customer service.”* Today, Aurora is a highly respected IT consulting and data security solutions firm that recently was honored with a California Small Business of the Year award.

According to de Souza, communications have been an extremely important factor in positioning the company as a trusted supplier for organizations large and small. In 2008, after an in-depth analysis of their current and anticipated future needs and an exhaustive review of advanced telecommunications solutions designed for small businesses, the management team decided to replace its out-of-date system with Avaya IP Office. As a result, Aurora—with 25 employees throughout the U.S. and in India—has been able to present a sophisticated enterprise image, backed by the capabilities to deliver outstanding customer service through the power of Unified Communications.

Background: By 2007, Aurora was expanding rapidly, and the management team realized that their existing digital key system without enhanced IP communications or routing capabilities could not handle the growth that the company was undergoing. They wanted an affordable, reliable, and scalable solution that would enable efficient call routing and handling from the company’s headquarters, as well as full-featured virtual offices for salespeople and engineers who were often on the move. They also needed to equip a back-office operation in Bombay, India, and a branch office in Florida to be fully integrated with headquarters in California. This level of functionality was necessary to avoid losing clients because of slow service or delays in providing proposals/pricing.

Aurora also needed a telecommunications system that would give them a “big company” presence in order to compete with larger companies for the same business.

“We went through an extensive process to select the right phone system,” de Souza recalled. *“We polled everyone about the features they wanted, and naturally, with so many techies in our midst, there was a lot of discussion and debate about the system we should*

acquire. Eventually we narrowed down the field to three vendors, and finally Avaya IP Office was the perfect solution in terms of the technology and the pricing.”

Starting off with a quick, successful installation and a rapid return on investment

The Aurora team worked with an Avaya channel partner to plan and deploy IP Office. De Souza explained, “One of the biggest decisions we had to make was

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— Philip de Souza, President and CEO, Aurora Enterprises

whether or not to retain a live receptionist. At first we weren't willing to compromise on that because we felt it was a non-negotiable part of our customer service strategy. And of course, we certainly could have stayed with that scenario. But our Avaya channel partner showed us that we could achieve tremendous savings and bring a rapid return on investment by creating a phone tree that brought customers to a human voice in just one step. After carefully considering the situation, we came to realize that this wouldn't damage our customer service, and the cost savings was tremendous.”

Aurora and their Avaya channel partner analyzed all the calls that came in, ultimately determining that the options of Sales, Support, and Finance would cover virtually all their inbound calls. One person was assigned to answer the phone for each department, with back-up responders available for busy periods. This proved to be an efficient approach for the company, and clients have been very satisfied with it.

De Souza said, “After automating our call handling system, we were able to move our receptionist to another position where she could be much more productive. In so doing we eliminated an unnecessary position, resulting in a full return on investment in less than six months based on just that one adjustment.”

De Souza added, “The installation performed by our Avaya channel partner went extremely quickly, and we were very pleased with the way their team helped us meet all our needs so effectively.”

Driving revenue and growth with powerful mobility and teleworker solutions

The next critical step in establishing their overall phone solution was to extend the functionality of IP Office to remote locations—for offices in Florida and Bombay, and for salespeople and engineers who are constantly on the move. IP phones were installed in the other office locations and at selected home offices, providing virtually the same functionality as in the main office.

According to de Souza, employees in Bombay provide critical back-end work that enables the company to deliver service quickly and efficiently. He has seen many contracts come in because of quotes and other paperwork that have been delivered literally overnight because of close coordination between employees in the US and India.

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De Souza explained that another critical focal point of the Aurora business is making an extremely close and absolutely reliable connection between their customers and the engineers who provide consulting and service to them. *“Our clients need to know that they can reach their own consulting engineer immediately if they have a question or a problem. At the same time, each engineer needs to have the equipment and the processes to prioritize and manage several clients at the same time. Nothing but the most efficient communication capabilities would do for this kind of scenario. IP Office is the solution that fills the bill.”*

IP Office enables engineers and salespeople on the road to receive calls and messages on their PDAs, because calls can be routed automatically from the desk phones. This eliminates the need to call in for messages, and customers can get through more quickly to obtain service. Aurora has also integrated e-mail, faxes, and voicemail through the Exchange server so that all messages can be received and responded to more quickly. This helps to deliver the type of customer service that has been the foundation of Aurora's success.

De Souza added, *“Overall, with Avaya IP Office we have the ability and flexibility to turn almost any employee into a highly effective teleworker. This enables us to extend our stringent customer service policies wherever our business leads us. It also allows us to ‘do business’ from home offices, hotels, even airports, anywhere in the world.”*

Achieving competitive advantage by creating a big image for a small company

De Souza reports that a few years ago he did not feel confident dealing with top-echelon companies because of the problems that Aurora had with the old phone system. *“We always ran a risk of compromising service because people had to remember to call in for messages, rather than receiving them instantly. And the office image was not what I wanted it to be because of phones constantly ringing and lots of other noise in the background. We have an entirely different image now, and that has made a tremendous difference. As the CEO, I can spend more time on strategic matters rather than worrying about day-to-day problems with our communications and the effect they might have on our corporate image.”*

The reliability of the infrastructure and capability to deliver calls directly to engineers and salespeople are strong selling points among Aurora's existing and potential customers. According to de Souza, *“Avaya IP Office helps us achieve a competitive edge in customer service that enables us to compete with much larger companies and to partner with major players in our industry.”*

Ensuring that excellence in customer service remains the hallmark of Aurora

Aurora's success among government clients, where speed is especially critical, helped earn it a California Small Business of the Year award.

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De Souza has found that, for all his employees, the many timesaving features of the IP Office solution have resulted in significant productivity increases. Managers also have the advantage of being able to see everything that's happening on the system, so they can recognize and troubleshoot problems immediately.

Aurora is currently expanding to new virtual offices in Calcutta and Australia, coincident with their upgrade to Avaya IP Office Version 5. De Souza said that moving to Web-based applications with the new version of Avaya IP Office helps employees gain greater flexibility and productivity while working at home or on the road.

“Enabling teleworkers and mobile workers to use a unified communications or customer service application via the Web is a major benefit,” said de Souza. *“This not only makes it easier for workers to bring up what they need from any location, it also saves the expense of deploying applications on every employee's laptop.”*

He added that offering Avaya IP Office in six well-defined, role-based solutions simplifies purchasing decisions for small business owners. According to De Souza: *“This helps us pre-define the tool set we require, giving us a better way to pick exactly what we need. Plus, it does wonders for our budget.”*

De Souza concluded, *“Overall, IP Office has helped to increase our productivity, reduce our costs, and enhance our customer service through a highly reliable platform and a very professional ‘big company’ image. All of these are very important in helping us to grow and maintain our cash flow.”*

Learn More

For more information on how Avaya can take your enterprise from where it is to where it needs to be, contact your Avaya Account Manager or a member of the Avaya Connect channel partner program, or access other collaterals by clicking on **Resource Library** at www.avaya.com.

Statements in this Case Study were made by Philip de Souza, President and CEO, Aurora Enterprises.

APPLICATIONS, SYSTEMS, AND SERVICES

- Avaya IP Office 500
- Avaya 5400 digital phones
- Avaya 5600 series IP phones
- VPNremote™ software
- VPN media gateway

ABOUT AURORA ENTERPRISES

Since 1990, security-conscious companies have turned to Aurora Enterprises' professionals for support of their business-critical applications. Aurora's experienced security experts help clients to conquer the complex challenges of data security. Aurora's Services, Sales and Software teams combine to uniquely position the company as a single-source, full service Solutions Provider to small and medium businesses, as well as to educational institutions and State/Local governments. For more information, contact www.auroraent.com.

ABOUT AVAYA

Avaya is a global provider of business collaboration and communications solutions, providing unified communications, contact centers, data solutions and related services to companies of all sizes around the world. For more information please visit www.avaya.com.

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References to Avaya include the Nortel Enterprise business, which was acquired as of December 18, 2009.

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