

Bank Group Cuts Costs, Strengthens Relationships with New IP Contact Center

SITUATION

German American Bancorp, like other large financial enterprises, understands that success rides on the ability to communicate efficiently with customers and employees. That's why its IT team decided to see what more they could do with the systems supporting their 28 offices.

What they found was a collection of outdated legacy telephone systems, LANs and WANs that were not scaled to handle voice and data effectively, and a bank-to-bank communications system that was difficult to use and did not permit station-to-station dialing.

"We realized we had to make some big changes," says Clay Ewing, President of Retail Financial Services at GAB. Ewing and his team initially identified the need to:

- Centralize management of the communications system
- Introduce one phone and voicemail system for all locations
- Improve customer service
- Reduce monthly phone bills and recurring line costs
- Affect changes securely and with zero negative impact on daily business

And Ewing put his finger on one more challenge: "Our IT staff didn't have time to fully analyze our needs and this would be a big effort. We needed help." Many VARs know voice, many know data, and many know cabling, but it is rare to find a resource that has specialized knowledge in all areas. "Matrix is one of the very few that has a proven history in all phases of our telecommunications needs, so that's who we selected."

SOLUTION

Ewing understood the pitfalls in developing a reliable and cost-effective solution. "Unless a discovery is done beforehand, all complex solutions are merely guesses."

Matrix Integration built a solution based on facts gained in a deep discovery process that involved Local Exchange Carrier (LEC) traffic studies; physical site surveys for cabling/voice/data; review of long distance, WAN and LEC billing; and a thorough look at the LAN/WAN infrastructure.

Company Profile

German American Bancorp (GAB) operates six community banks with 28 branches in nine contiguous southwestern Indiana counties.

After a careful analysis of the results, Matrix Integration recommended a solution built on a Cisco platform, wherein all administration and telecommunications would be integrated into a single, simple management platform.

"There was a lot to like about it," says Ewing. "It's scalable, we can grow with it, and it promises better customer satisfaction and quicker response through a single contact center."

RESULTS

German American Bancorp can now answer calls from any location via its centralized Contact Center. And, although it's still new, the voice solution is beginning to deliver on all counts: reducing costs, making operations more efficient, and delivering better service to callers.

When asked to describe the results, Ewing says "looking back, it seemed we were going to have a very painful and risky transition. But Matrix came in on time, on budget, with no downtime, and with a better than expected result."

The new Cisco solution is working for customers and employees alike. "Bank-to-bank and person-to-person communications are greatly improved and our staff loves it," he says. And with the new corporate directory at all stations, we've eliminated a great deal of pain for our end users."

And GAB's plans for the future? "We've already expanded the site-list by two additional bank sites through acquisition, without service interruption or delays. This gives us a very positive feeling that we made a sound business decision," says Ewing.