

Smiths Medical chooses hosting to support merger and acquisition activity

Medical industry leader reduces integration costs and increases service levels with improved call center agent and management integration, no in-house infrastructure

THE SITUATION

When Smiths Medical purchased the Medex Company, it had a major challenge. It needed to determine how best to integrate its multiple contact centers and customer service 800 numbers while maintaining outstanding customer service and maximizing corporate resources.

Because the call types of the two entities were so similar, it seemed clear that an integration of the resources made sense. But as Smiths Medical assessed the different call center software applications and phones available inside the corporation the company realized an IP-based solution would mean replacing many phones, adding unwanted cost.

That's when Smiths Medical reviewed Aastra's hosted IP contact center, Centergy® Virtual Contact Center:

"After a five-minute demonstration of an agent being established with merely a cell phone, a laptop and an internet connection, we saw a clear opportunity based on flexibility to support our long-term business objective", said Ron Johnston, Global IT Infrastructure Manager.

THE SMITHS MEDICAL STRATEGIC IT/IS APPROACH

Smiths Medical has experienced dramatic growth, both organically and through acquisition over the past several years. The company has a simple and effective approach to managing its global networks, communications and applications: standardize, standardize, standardize. For every application the company has a standard package. The VoIP standard is from a major networking equipment supplier, although it continues to use Aastra's Pointspan IP-PBX solution for its Medication Delivery headquarters, among the most reliable, scalable and flexible IP-PBXs available on the market today.

smiths medical
bringing technology to life



THE PROBLEM

Smiths Medical's next target for standardization was the contact centers. This would allow them to provide the same functionality to each agent; but at a premium, based on the original review of costs associated with integrating its regional offices through an IP system coupled with relocation costs to consolidate some call centers. Also, management of remote agents would not provide a truly unified "one agent pool" view across all sites, requiring the need to consolidate centers, an expensive, time consuming process.

To make matters worse, the company had a concrete deadline of Thanksgiving Day to complete the consolidation of the contact centers and integration of the agents, but the relocation plan had not been approved as of July!

THE RESOLUTION

Aastra's Centergy Virtual Contact Center (CVCC™) solution operates on a simple premise: Anyone can be an agent, anywhere they have a phone of any kind and an internet and/or intranet connection (56K or greater.) And since it's web-based there is no software to deploy.

Agents or managers log in via the internet and identify the phone number at which they are working, whether it be their desk number, home office number, remote office, or mobile number. Once logged in, they become a member of the Smiths Medical agent pool as if they were all in the same building on the same phone system. Across existing centers, the same PCs and phones remain in use and Smiths Medical instantly has connectivity and integration.

Furthermore, Smiths Medical leases this technology through a hosted model. Aastra provisions the system the first time, then provides access to its secured, hosted infrastructure.

The only things Smiths Medical has to deploy are the access usernames and passwords; plus, the easy web based training videos provided by Aastra educate an agent and have them operational in about 40 minutes – and only a little longer is needed for a supervisor or manager.

THE RESULTS

Smiths Medical had virtually instant integration with no capital outlay. It allowed the call center consolidation to proceed on schedule without forcing the relocation to occur, keeping costs low while accelerating its integration and efficiency. Aastra's price was less than fifty percent of the annualized cost for the IP contact center solution. How? No systems to buy or support costs to bear and comparable service fees all bundled into one predictable monthly fee.

Add to that, Smiths has enjoyed the capability to add agents at peak times by simply deploying more licenses of Centergy Virtual Contact Center only for the time required. Something only a hosted system can do.

WHAT'S NEXT

The value of the of the initial implementation for external callers led Smiths to convert its extensive Global IT help desk to CVCC even before the first implementation was complete. This has also been very successful.

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In the spirit of standardizing good ideas and effective solutions, Smiths Medical is currently evaluating a global standardization of its contact center applications to Aastra's Centergy Virtual Contact Center. Their UK Customer Service would be first, where Smiths Medical will be able to continue serving local customers with local agents while managing its contact center performance worldwide, as well as improving its ability to support off-hours and peak call times with US agents.

“In our business, as in most, the customer is king and our contact centers are the face of our company,” said Mr. Johnston. “We have a steadfast commitment to provide in-country support across the globe, yet need to provide a

high degree of responsiveness, even in the off hours and peak times, and so seek to leverage our global experts within our contact centers. And to be able to do that with no capital outlay, an extremely reliable and flexible solution, and at a “pay per use” model, there's more than a clear business case, there's an immediate return on the investment and a predictable TCO (total cost of ownership) that's unbeatable in a traditional purchase model.”

About Smiths Medical

Smiths Medical is a leading global provider of medical devices for the hospital, emergency, home and specialist environments. Their products are used during critical and intensive care, surgery, post-operative care during recovery, and in a series of high-end home infusion therapies. Employing 7,500 people with manufacturing in the U.S., the U.K., Mexico and Italy, Smiths Medical is part of Smiths Group plc, London, and is committed to developing the highest quality, most reliable products to provide innovative, convenient, and cost-effective drug delivery worldwide.

Why Aastra OnDemand

As a global leader in VoIP and an award-winning PBX manufacturer, Aastra solutions are the right choice for a medical device distributor like Smiths Medical. Leveraging advanced telephony features and a contact center solution that allows companies to provide superior customer service, healthcare organizations like Smiths Medical achieve competitive advantages.