

CONVERGENT

TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

Visiting Nurse Service of New York

With a mission to provide vital home health care services to a population of more than 10 million, Visiting Nurse Service (VNS) of New York has a very big responsibility. Each day this 110-year-old non-profit organization dispatches some 5,000 clinicians, therapists and home health aides to provide a wide variety of in-home services, including senior and private care, after-hospital and rehabilitation therapy, hospice care, children's and family services and more.

In all, the VNS staff of 7,800, located in nine major locations and in hospitals across the area, makes more than two million visits to some 100,000 clients each year across Nassau and Westchester Counties and the five boroughs of New York. For more information, visit www.vnsny.org.

Challenge

VNS continually seeks to improve and enhance its delivery of client services. VNS believed that new communication solutions coming on the market could significantly improve the organization's performance and provide the foundation for future gains, and was eager to take advantage.

A major area for continuous improvement especially important for VNS is business continuity. Since VNS provides a healthcare lifeline for thousands of shut-in clients, to be out of reach is simply out of the question.

In terms of business continuity, there were times when data network problems knocked regional VNS offices offline and shut off the essential flow of clinical, human resources and financial information. A series of events, including virus attacks, a neighborhood power outage in 2001 that affected a major VNS site in Manhattan and the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York, brought home the need to strengthen the organization's communication continuity and capabilities.

Another area for enhancement was identified in the VNS contact center and the supporting CENTREX system. The organization believed newer technology could deliver enhanced contact center capabilities. VNS also realized that a new system would offer opportunities for greater efficiencies based on easier administration.

“Our clients depend on VNS not just for their comfort, but for their health and in some cases, their very lives. We can never accept a circumstance when VNS is not available to our clients.”

– Randy Cleghorne, Director of IT Planning and Management and CTO

Solution

From a half dozen early contenders, VNS narrowed the field to two: an Avaya solution proposed by an Avaya BusinessPartner, and one proposed by Cisco Systems. VNS chose the Avaya IP Telephony Solution as a strategic platform for keeping VNS on the cutting edge in providing superior client service. The Avaya intelligent communications solution ensures business continuity and continuous communication across the Metropolitan Area Network, creating an “always on” intelligent communications environment to support mobile workers and clients utilizing the latest unified communications and mobility applications.

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Applications and Services

- Avaya MultiVantage™ Communications Applications
- Avaya Communication Manager
- Avaya Call Management System
- Avaya IP Agent
- Avaya Extension to Cellular
- Avaya Modular Messaging
- Avaya S8700 Media Servers
- Avaya S8300 Media Servers
- Avaya G700 Media Gateways with Local Survivable Processor
- Avaya Global Services:
 - Avaya ExpertNet™ VoIP Assessment Tool
 - Avaya IP Network Readiness Assessment
 - Avaya Business Communication Consulting
 - Avaya Maintenance Services Agreement
 - Avaya Applications Consulting and Integration

“**The tipping point for us was the Avaya ability to support our call center. Our folks would attend presentations from Avaya and their eyes would just light up, thinking about how they could improve processes.**”

– Randy Cleghorne, Director of IT Planning and Management and CTO

Results

- **System reliability and business continuity.** Even if a VNS site became inaccessible, the client service staff could easily continue their work from another VNS location, or even from home. Redundant servers at the two main Manhattan locations provide reassurance that VNS professionals will be available for their clients. A more robust network virtually eliminated frame relay problems and cut voice communication problems to zero.
- **More personalized customer interactions and faster service.** In the contact centers, call distribution based on agent skills now helps callers reach the right agent faster. Seeing that they could deliver more personalized customer service by funneling calls to their groups through the Avaya Call Management System, contact center managers expanded capacity: The Avaya Call Management System now serves some 250 agents, up from the maximum of 100 possible before the Avaya solution. When clients call their regional offices after hours, they are automatically transferred to the main contact center.
- **Improved contact center management.** Contact center managers have the ability to gather and analyze contact center performance statistics. Before, answering questions about such key issues as call volumes or speed of answer required an educated guess.
- **Enhanced mobility provides increased responsiveness.** Avaya Modular Messaging delivers voice messages, fax and e-mail to over 1,000 employees over their PCs or their telephones making it easier and faster to check and manage messages, and users can respond faster and work more effectively from any location. VNS call center agents can also work from anywhere using laptops equipped with Avaya IP Agent software and simply logging into the Avaya Media Server. For a select group of VNS staffers, who must be quickly available in any circumstance, Avaya Extension to Cellular instantly bridges office calls to their cellular phones. Callers no longer have to carry and dial a laundry list of reach numbers to make contact.
- **Reduced costs and improved staff productivity.** Moves, adds and changes, which previously required precious staff resources and often took up to a month to complete, are quick and easy due to the straightforward administration of IP endpoints. Another huge payoff for VNS: a net savings of \$900,000 yearly in communication expenses. Five-digit dialing now links all locations and faster linkage of people and processes fosters more productive collaboration.

For a more in-depth description of this customer's use of Intelligent Communications, go to www.avaya.com and click on “Read All Case Studies.”

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