



G & C
Interconnects, Ltd.

Challenge

- Consolidate separate phone lines for three business units
- Streamline business processes
- Enable a totally integrated home office solution
- Equip mobile veterinary vans with enhanced communications

Solution

Avaya IP Office 500, Avaya 5400 digital phones, Avaya 5600 series IP phones with Avaya's VPNremote™ software, VPN media gateways.

Value Created

- Productivity increases
- Increased revenue generation
- Enhanced customer service
- Staffing flexibility
- New mobility options for highly mobile staff
- Cost savings of over \$200,000/year
- Integration of voice messaging, faxes, and e-mail
- Scalability

Veterinary service drives revenue and growth with innovative Unified Communications solutions

Highland Heights, Kentucky — As managing partners in a dynamic family veterinary practice, Ray and Shandon Stamper have always been proactive in seeking out technology solutions that help deliver exemplary service and efficient business processes. They embraced the potential of IP telephony and unified communications after expanding the practice to include two new businesses—mobile veterinary unit services and pet grooming.

“At first we accommodated the new businesses by adding two traditional phone systems, but that resulted in chaos,” Shandon explained. “People were taking phone calls on three different phones for three different businesses at each desk, and then struggling to track people down to take those calls. We were lucky to find a very elegant and affordable technology solution for that problem, and the same solution opened up a whole new world of possibilities for improving other areas of our practice.”

Ray commented, “Before we started working with G&C Interconnects [a member of the Avaya BusinessPartner program], we thought sophisticated communications technologies were applicable only to Fortune 500 companies with mega budgets. After we learned about the huge range of functionality available for small businesses with Avaya IP Office, our thoughts moved quickly to other areas where IP communications could help us streamline our processes and drive future growth. Our innovations have already included supplying VoIP phones for the mobile vans, home-office stations for part-time receptionists, an efficient integration of voicemail, e-mails, and faxes, and much more.”

Managing calls efficiently while maintaining personalized customer service

The 38-year-old family business known as Highland Heights Animal Hospital, a Pet WOW care center, is one of the largest veterinary practices serving Northern Kentucky and the Cincinnati, Ohio, area. It has 32 staff members and more than 35,000 customers. Shandon and Ray's first goal in deploying a new communications solution was to manage the large volume of calls for the three businesses while maintaining a personal touch with all customers. They wanted to achieve this efficiently and without undue disruption to clinicians and other employees.

With IP Office, the hospital now routes all calls through two full-time receptionists onsite and two home-office workers during peak times. Onsite and home stations have

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– Ray Stamper, Co-owner,
Pet WOW and Highland Heights
Animal Hospital

comparable equipment to enable them to answer, route, and manage incoming calls from their PC screens.

“The ability to extend full functionality to people working at home has solved the problem of covering the phones during peak hours.” Ray said. *“We were amazed to find that home workers can have full, seamless access to everyone in our facility, even via paging. That has allowed us to expand our labor pool to hiring experienced people who might not be willing to come to an office for just a few hours.”*

All incoming calls ring the call center telephones only. On rare occasions when all receptionists are busy, calls transfer to other areas of the facility, where the phones display whether the call is for the hospital, mobile veterinary practice, or grooming service. With this routing arrangement, only a small number of calls ring beyond the call center, so other technicians and staff are not bothered by phones constantly ringing—thus creating a quieter clinical environment and greater productivity.

Shandon describes the new approach as a transformational shift. *“Communications are managed so smoothly now with IP Office. It's a joy to watch the call handlers move calls around for all three businesses so easily on their computer monitors using SoftConsole. It's very efficient, and it helps us to create great customer satisfaction.”*

Better time management, call routing, and quality controls

It is particularly important that the practice maintain a connection between pet owners and the doctors treating the animals, without

overtaxing the doctors' time. They manage this now by directing calls from pet owners to a doctor's designated “call handler,” who can listen to the messages—which are often lengthy—and summarize them for the doctor. When the doctor provides an answer, the doctor's call handler can respond to the patient, saying “The doctor asked me to tell you...(whatever the message is).” The result? Satisfying and productive communications that make the best use of everyone's time.

“The doctors love the way we have arranged for them to receive their voice messages, both from pet owners and from fellow clinicians,” Shandon commented. *“In fact, they live by it, because it helps them manage their time so much better.”*

The menu and routing system are also organized to streamline calls to the “business” side of the practice, and to provide a significant level of screening. Menu options successfully route different types of callers, such as vendors and job applicants, so that calls are prioritized and taken by the right person.

For quality control, a mailbox stores recordings of a sampling of calls, divided into folders for each type of business. This enables monitoring of how calls are handled and working with employees who may need coaching. Ray explained, “This is a great quality control measure. It serves another purpose, too, and that is to make sure all of our communications keep the warm human touch, no matter how automated we become. If we were over-automating, we'd pick that up right away in the attitude of the callers.”

Innovative use of mobility options saves money and enhances clinical efficiency

Ray and Shandon also wanted to improve communications to and from mobile veterinary units, which provide both convenience for customers and comfort for pets. Originally the technicians in the vans used cell phones and broadband “aircards” for the computers; but they found they could reduce costs by eliminating the cell phones and routing calls to IP phones located in the vehicles, utilizing the “aircards.” This provides four-digit dialing between the vans and the hospital, access to voicemail and intercoms, and other functionality of the office phones. It also saves on cell phone costs, except for a single basic cell phone in each van as a backup in broadband dead spots.



“The clinical value of this is tremendous,” Ray explained. *“After being diagnosed in the van, a pet can be sent in for surgery or other care, and by the time it arrives at the hospital, the onsite doctors will already know about the case. The onsite and mobile van doctors can communicate back and forth about these cases all day, without ever interrupting their workflow.”*



Doctors and technicians in the Pet WOW mobile veterinary vans utilize IP phones for close communications with surgeons and other staff at the main hospital.

The practice has created a specific extension for doctors in the vans to call when they need to convey clinical information about pets they are sending to the hospital. After a doctor in a mobile van leaves a message, it's placed into an e-mail that is delivered to the surgical center's inbox. A projection onto the wall at the surgical center indicates that a message has come in. The onsite doctor can listen to it and easily communicate back to the physician on the unit.

Shandon compared this process to the previous scenario: “Before, doctors would try to link up by phone, but it was hard because they moved around so much. And writing messages was too time-consuming. Now they have a quick, easy way to communicate that helps drive revenue because it enables the clinical staff to be more productive.”

The mobility features of IP Office are also used for administrative staff. Calls to an extension can ring simultaneously on the office phone and cell phone, delivering full functionality of the office phone to the cell phone when the cell phone is answered. Users appreciate not having to give out their personal cell numbers for business use. Messages can also be delivered via e-mail. Ray commented, *“I love the fact that every voice message taken by my office phone is transmitted to my e-mail, and I can take it right away on my Blackberry®. That works*

“ We add 300 customers to our practice every month, and that's huge in the veterinary field. We also run our business with fewer people than other practices doing much less volume. Our Avaya phone system is important to our current success and our future planning. We've pushed the envelope on using its capabilities to streamline our business, and we will continue to do so, because it really makes a difference to us and our customers. ”

*—Shandon Stamper, Co-owner,
Pet WOW and Highland Heights
Animal Hospital*

extremely well for me because I often need to respond to situations quickly, no matter where I am.”

Superior customer relations and streamlined business processes help drive business growth

The Stampers believe the combination of great customer service and helping their staff be more productive is the key to success in their business. They continually work on innovative strategies to achieve this. The practice plans to expand to two satellite locations, which will be connected via Virtual Private Network (VPN) with IP phones—essentially the same strategy used for the home office solution.

Clearly, all the applications Shandon and Ray have built into the fabric of their business provide incremental cost savings and productivity increases; but what do these translate to in terms of real bottom-line business value?

According to Ray, "We could not be realizing the revenue we do right now with the staff that we have without the capabilities Avaya IP Office delivers. The way that translates into hard dollars is in the amount we save on the staff that would be required to do all the processing the system does. We believe it would take anywhere from five to eight additional people, so our savings translate into well over \$200,000 a year."

In terms of customer relations—which the Stampers believe is the key differentiator between Highland Heights and other veterinary practices in the area—the phone system is central to success. "We add 300 customers to our practice every month, and that's huge in the veterinary field. We also run our business with fewer people than

other practices doing much less volume. Our Avaya phone system is important to our current success and our future planning. We've pushed the envelope on using its capabilities to streamline our business, and we will continue to do so, because it really makes a difference to us and our customers," Shandon concluded.

Learn More

For more information on how Avaya Intelligent Communications can take your enterprise from where it is to where it needs to be, contact your Avaya Client Executive or a member of the Avaya Authorized BusinessPartner program, or visit "Do Your Research" at www.avaya.com.

APPLICATIONS, SYSTEMS, AND SERVICES

- Avaya IP Office 500
- Avaya 5400 digital phones
- Avaya 5600 series IP phones with VPNremote™ software
- Third-party support VPN gateway appliance
- Service agreement with a member of the Avaya BusinessPartner program

ABOUT HIGHLAND HEIGHTS ANIMAL HOSPITAL/PET WOW

Highland Heights Animal Hospital, a Pet WOW care center, is the largest veterinary practice in the Northern Kentucky/greater Cincinnati area. The hospital was founded in 1971 by Dr. Raymond D. Stamper, and today, working in both clinical and administrative capacities, Dr. Stamper's family members continue his tradition of superior veterinary care and great customer service. The practice operates an extremely wide range of veterinary and pet grooming services both onsite and via mobile veterinary vans. For more information, visit www.petwow.com.

ABOUT G&C INTERCONNECTS

Cincinnati-based G&C Interconnects has been in the technology industry since 1994, providing quality computer and telephony services to its customers. G&C has additional divisions which handle high-end multi-site Home Technology installations and Video Recording services for its clients. G&C provides its services to clients all over the country. For more information, visit G&C at www.RealWorldTime.com.

ABOUT AVAYA

Avaya is a global leader in enterprise communications systems. The company provides unified communications, contact centers, and related services directly and through its channel partners to leading businesses and organizations around the world. Enterprises of all sizes depend on Avaya for state-of-the-art communications that improve efficiency, collaboration, customer service and competitiveness.

For more information please visit www.avaya.com.

Statements in this Case Study were made by Ray Stamper and Shandon Stamper, Co-owners, Pet WOW and Highland Heights Animal Hospital.

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