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NEWS

[March 02, 2009]

Mobile Veterinary Practice Uses Avaya Unified Communications to Ensure Speedy House Calls, Responsive Service to Help Clients' Pets

(Marketwire Via Acquire Media NewsEdge) BASKING RIDGE, NJ, March 2 / MARKET WIRE/ -- Highland Heights Animal Hospital, located in Northern Kentucky, selected a small-business Internet protocol (IP) communications system from Avaya to keep its highly mobile doctors, technicians and staff connected to customers and colleagues. The hospital serves as a traveling facility with a surgical home-base that brings top-quality veterinary care and pet grooming services directly to clients' homes in Cincinnati, Ohio and northern Kentucky.



Using three vans fitted out with mobile examination rooms and pharmacy capabilities, Highland Heights' doctors and technicians log thousands of miles annually and a dozen appointments daily within a 30-mile radius consisting of almost 11,000 pet owners. Visiting pet owners directly helps many of them avoid the bother of bringing their pets to an office for a checkup or grooming. When doctors and staff arrive at a client's home, the pets are escorted into the vans where they receive basic veterinary care, and if required, transport back to Highland Heights' medical and surgical facility. The pet is delivered back to the client's home when the medical procedure is complete.

This unique approach to pet care required a solution featuring advanced communications capabilities that helped to ensure each hospital van had consistent and reliable mobile communications. To do this, Highland Heights Animal Hospital turned to a solution anchored by Avaya IP Office, the leading IP communications system for small businesses.

"Our mobile teams of doctors and technicians, and staff and medical teams at the surgical facility must keep in touch with each other constantly," said Shandon Stamper, co-owner of Highland Heights Animal Hospital. "It's also vital to keep our clients informed about their pets' condition if they need further medical care." Highland Heights worked with G&C Interconnects, a Cincinnati-based voice, data, and home technology provider, to come up with a solution powered by Avaya IP Office 500.

"The first thing we did was solve their phone system challenges. They used to have three separate telephones at each workstation, so we merged the three systems into one," said Kristian Guntzelman, chief innovation officer of G&C Interconnects. "Now, a single phone's display tells them what business unit to answer for, such as grooming or medical facility help, and customers only need to dial one phone number to get any type of service." This successful conversion led Highland to pursue their ambitious mobile vans strategy.

"Highland Heights told us they wanted to get rid of the cell phones in their mobile vans, which were getting costly, yet they still wanted to maintain contact with those workers," Guntzelman recalls. "Working with Avaya, we came up with a solution using mobile broadband and Avaya's VPN Remote telephones. Now, each mobile unit has a telephone off the main office's PBX. Mobile workers are just a 4-digit extension away, and can respond to voice calls and group pages as if they were in the office." In addition to Avaya IP Office 500, Highland Heights' installation consisted of Avaya 5400 digital phones, Avaya 5600-series IP phones with Avaya's VPN Remote software, a VPN gateway, and a high-speed Internet circuit from the local cable company. The phones in the vans are connected by a broadband Internet service provided by their cellular carrier.

With the Avaya VPN software, phones and gateway, Highland Heights' remote workers in vans can get the same secure communications they receive in the main office, because the VPN phones in the vans actually become remote extensions of IP Office. Mobile workers can route incoming office calls to their VPN phone, so they are seamlessly connected, and doctors and staff in the vans can get all of the capabilities they have at their main office, such as voice mail, messaging, and

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Blogs Contributors

Rich Tehrani
Tom Keating
Tim Gray

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conferencing, without the cost of adding VPN gateways in each van.

According to Shandon, Avaya IP Office has also helped Highland Heights save more money on local calls, since they no longer have to manage cellular minutes based on the usage of the vans.

Avaya IP communications keep doctors informed and customers happy Highland Heights' doctors now have access to other useful capabilities of Avaya IP Office. Voicemail is accessible via their e-mail systems, which improves doctor communications with the headquarters staff. Additionally, mobile doctors can now dial into a pre-programmed phone number to record their experiences with every pet -- something that is especially important for those pets which are transported for extra medical care. According to co-owner of the practice, Ray Stamper, "Doctors who are mobile can send their detailed voice remarks to the medical facility via e-mail. This ensures complex information about clients' pets is accurately communicated, and it's another way to make sure clients' pets are well cared for." Highland Heights is also using IP Office to make its customer operations run more efficiently. In addition to providing single number access for multiple services, an automated attendant capability in Avaya IP Office tells callers which numbers to press to reach a specific service or the receptionist. If a customer calls the medical office and wants to speak with a doctor in one of the mobile vans, the receptionist can transfer the client's call to the mobile doctor. If the receptionist is busy, she can check her phone display -- which now shows what employees are available -- and send calls to them, helping to ensure customer calls are handled promptly.

"Avaya IP Office was a perfect choice for us. We can easily manage the system ourselves, make clients happier, and save money by using our staff resources wisely," Shandon said.

"When it comes to communications, even the smallest business wants the same benefits that big business gets." 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.

About G&C Interconnects Cincinnati-based G&C Interconnects has been in the technology industry since 1994, providing quality computer & 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: <http://www.RealWorldTime.com>.

Media Inquiries: Jonathan Varman 908-953-6432jvarman@avaya.com Copyright ? 2009 Marketwire

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