



# Unified communications helps unite a company

## Customer Profile

Delta Star is an employee-owned manufacturer of medium-power stationary electrical transformers as well as being the sole manufacturer of mobile transformers and substations in the U.S. Its nearly 500 employees are divided between facilities in Lynchburg, Virginia and San Carlos, California.



### Situation

From the time Delta Star's Virginia and California manufacturing facilities were established in 1960, communications between the two locations had been difficult. Having two separate phone systems meant calls from one facility to the other had to be made by dialing long distance, and calls from Virginia to California were often met by busy signals. The result was the two facilities often operated more like separate companies, and the ability to share information between them was very restricted. With the president looking to break down the barriers between the two operating units, Delta Star engaged Advanced Logic Industries (ALI) to find an alternative that would bring the two together.

One option investigated was upgrading the then-current digital phone system in Lynchburg to Voice over IP (VoIP). That idea was quickly discarded, however, when Delta Star realized it would cost tens of thousands of dollars just to upgrade the Virginia phone system – before a single handset was purchased. That's when ALI proposed adopting the Cisco unified communications platform.

"Moving to unified communications would not only solve the phone issue for us, it would provide many additional benefits as well," says Tommy Hall, Corporate IT Manager at Delta Star. "When we found out it would also cost less to install the entire system, handsets and all, than it would just to perform the software upgrade to the old system, it was an easy decision."

### Solution

On the recommendation of Advanced Logic Industries (ALI), Delta Star started with Cisco Unified Communications Manager 6 Business Edition (also known as Call Manager) in the fall of 2007. ALI is a Cisco Premier Partner that has been delivering a wide range of technology solutions, including Cisco unified communications, to clients in the mid-Atlantic region since 1991.

Glenn Moon, a Senior Network Engineer at ALI, worked closely with Hall and his team to implement the technology and assure the transition from the old phone systems to the unified communications platform was seamless to the users.

### Results

While Version 6 business edition had an immediate impact in simplifying inter-office communications – calls between the two facilities went from long distance to four-digit dialing – Hall became concerned that the entire unified communications system was residing on one server. It was not only a risk in case of an unexpected service interruption, it also created problems with planned updates and system upgrades. In December, 2008 Delta Star migrated to Cisco Unified Communications Manager 7 and Cisco Unity 7.

"Moving to Unity gave us the load sharing and redundancy we were looking for, and it made it easy to integrate unified communications into our Windows platform," Hall says. "Voicemail messages now drop directly into Microsoft® Exchange Server 2007, where our users can pick them up as email instead of having to call in."

The new system gave Delta Star many other enterprise-level capabilities as well. Both facilities now have conference calling, speed dial, caller ID, even video conferencing capabilities. They can easily transfer calls from Lynchburg to San Carlos and vice versa. A built-in directory has eliminated the need to maintain paper phone lists, and a presence feature shows who is available at that time. The executive team is even able to forward office calls to their mobile phones when they travel.

Hall says along with service upgrades have come cost reductions. For example, the company previously spent \$2,000 a year in Lynchburg alone, just to move extensions from one office to another. Now changing extensions is as easy as unplugging a handset and plugging it into an outlet in another office. In addition, Delta Star reduced its long distance expenditures significantly. There's more to come, too.

"We've only scratched the surface of what this system can do," he says. "The only limit seems to be what we can think to do with it. It's not just the technology it's the implementation also. ALI has really brought this system to life. It has really helped us reach our goal of acting and operating like a single, cohesive company."

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