



A Healthy Connection

Case Study: The Royal District Nursing Service of South Australia (RDNS)

Not-for-profit nursing group chooses Optus and Alphawest to connect nurses and clients

Introduction

The Royal District Nursing Service of South Australia (RDNS) is a non-government and not-for-profit health care organisation providing high-quality mobile nursing and other care to people living in Adelaide. The RDNS home and community services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week with services including wound management, diabetes management and health care for people with disabilities. The organisation relies heavily on telephone contact with patients to deliver timely and cutting edge medical care.

The Opportunity

To deal with incoming telephone calls from patients and families, the RDNS operates a contact centre with a database of approximately 5,000 patients. As demand for its critical services increased, the RDNS realised the organisation was facing capacity constraints and needed to expand its current contact centre capabilities. Expanding to a new second location would give the RDNS more space for a growing team, address the increased client demand, and ensure prompt and professional responses to patients.

The additional site enabled the RDNS to set up a second, redundant IT and telephone system to ensure business would not be affected in case of a failure or outage at the primary site. The RDNS also needed to add 100 new phones for the 80 staff at the new site.

"A significant driver to engage Optus was to establish a disaster recovery telephony solution because if the old system went down there was no back-up system to support the high number of calls coming in," said Glen Winkler; the RDNS Director of Management Information Services."

To accommodate this expansion, the RDNS called on Optus and with its Information and Communications Technology (ICT) services subsidiary Alphawest, to assess its telecommunications needs.

"We viewed the technology upgrade as an opportunity for the RDNS to expand capacity. Both Optus and Alphawest provided us with a very clear plan and a flexible approach to support our nursing services."

The Solution

To increase the efficiency of the RDNS' new contact centre, Optus recommended implementing a fully-redundant Cisco IP Telephony solution with a Zeacom Contact Centre Application.

"The Zeacom Application accompanied by the Cisco IP Telephony platform was the perfect answer for the RDNS because we were able to present a seamless solution across both existing and new RDNS locations," said Winkler.

The Cisco IP Telephony solution allows the RDNS to reduce costs and complexity because voice and data can be transmitted across one line. As a result of the new solution, the not-for-profit organisation will not be billed for separate data and phone lines.

"The change in applications meant the call centre phone systems were simpler and faster because processes within the application were streamlined, therefore staff were able to assist more clients in less time," said Winkler. "We chose the solution because it was proven technology that incorporated best of breed business partners, which gave us a lot of confidence."

Optus selected the Zeacom Contact Centre Application as it was the RDNS' legacy solution and the RDNS staff had recently been trained on the application prior to the tender being released. As they were already familiar with the system, Optus did not have to re-train staff and the RDNS operators could begin using the new system immediately.

Through the Cisco IP Telephony solution the RDNS staff members are able to queue calls, access client records in the database and direct calls more efficiently whilst on the phone. The system dynamically reacts to caller demands and organises incoming calls based on pre-defined business parameters set by the administrator. If requests from clients arrive via telephone, email or the web, staff can manage and report on these requests in a single centralised environment. Call management has also been improved through the use of headsets, rather than traditional telephone handsets, to facilitate dialling with the click of a mouse.

The greatest challenge with the implementation was the tight timeframe for delivery, in which Optus and Alphawest had six weeks to complete the first phase of the rollout - a process that would usually take between 8-12 weeks. The first phase involved setting up the Corporate Head Office at the new site and equipping 80 operators with phones, giving them the ability to make calls and provide basic assistance.

Phase two was completed two weeks after receiving the equipment involved in the installation of a fail-over solution from the new site to the existing contact centre. The implementation phase provided a seamless solution, with minimal staff disruption, having a positive impact on 150 staff members across the two RDNS sites.

The Business Benefits

With the assistance of Optus and Alphawest, the RDNS has increased the efficiency of its business. They have reduced costs by consolidating charges for voice and data lines and increased productivity through working more efficiently. The RDNS incurred fewer training costs due to the simplicity of the new application. Prior to rolling out this solution, the RDNS did not have a disaster recovery plan as its IT and telephony was in one location. By splitting their corporate and call centre business, the RDNS was able to have disaster recovery built into the solution. The RDNS staged an internal trial of the disaster recovery system in which the new Cisco IP Telephony solution provided a very quick response time to getting a fully operational phone system up and running.

"Optus and Alphawest have been exceptional in setting up the contact centre, under such tight deadlines," said Winkler. "We presented Optus with some key strategic drivers, such as improvement of customer service, the ability to serve more customers and to incorporate a disaster recovery plan, which have all been met."

Since the implementation began, Optus and Alphawest have worked closely with the RDNS to ensure the solution is fully operational, and the two organisations continue to work together to improve customer service, serve more customers whilst incorporating a disaster recovery plan.

To illustrate Optus' significant experience in managing high volume call centres, the RDNS management staff visited an Optus call centre, which currently uses a similar solution, as has helped them better understand the solution, and make more effective use of the technology.

"Optus and Alphawest are managing our relationship very well with both businesses continuing to suggest further improvements to our ICT strategy, from new technologies to communication billing," said Winkler.

Currently the RDNS is developing an approach with Optus to investigate ways of giving nurses real-time information via a handheld PDA device and giving caregivers remote access to client files, to make their jobs much easier.

As a result of a close and trusted relationship with Optus and Alphawest the RDNS plans to expand its virtual private network to create a more mobile workforce.

Further Information

If you want to discuss how Optus can help you reduce your costs and lower your business complexity through innovative communications solutions, contact your Optus Account Manager, call our hotline on 1800 555 937 or visit our website at optusbusiness.com.au.