

## Taking the Plunge

IPC Technologies helps a local financial institution save money and gain needed functionality with a ShoreTel IP telephony system.



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**O**rganizations in the banking industry are facing contradictory challenges: They must answer market demands for innovative products and services while also managing costs. Meeting these challenges requires agility, yet many financial institutions cling to inflexible processes and technologies that inhibit their ability to evolve and grow.

It’s simple human nature. Sticking with the “tried and true” seems safer than diving into the unknown.

Ripping out legacy systems can be scary, but Bay Port Federal Credit Union has proven it’s not afraid to take the plunge if business needs demand it. Aging PBXs and leased Centrex phone lines weren’t providing the functionality the credit union needed, so the organ-

ization decided to replace them with an IP telephony solution.

### Diving In

IP telephony systems are more flexible and scalable than traditional PBXs because calls are routed over the data network using voice over IP. There’s no separate voice infrastructure to manage and maintain. Users can plug in their IP phones wherever there’s a network connection, and branch locations can tap into the central phone network via a data network link.

Despite these proven benefits, some organizations remain cautious when it comes to replacing their existing voice systems. Many opt for a hybrid system or piecemeal approach. Bay Port Federal Credit Union, however, decid-



IPC is one among a short list of this country's premier IT solutions providers, delivering to our clients award-winning Consulting Services, Managed Services, and Training. Delivering solutions that make good economic sense to businesses and organizations, IPC supports an ever-changing array of "Best of Breed" Technology Products. Our clients, ranging from Fortune 50 firms to start-up enterprises, have experienced attractive returns on investment from technologies implemented and supported by IPC since 1981.

ed to test the waters with an end-to-end IP telephony solution.

"We determined that it would be better to replace all the equipment at all of our branches to save money and get the award-winning ShoreTel Smart™ technology features like 'Office Anywhere,' 'Find Me' and 'Unified Messaging' that we didn't have with the Centrex system," said Jerry Nichols, VP of IS for Bay Port Federal Credit Union. "We didn't want to look at some of the hybrid-type solutions. We decided that we would go all-out "pure" voice over IP."

## The Water's Fine

Making that decision was easier thanks to Bay Port Federal Credit Union's long-term partnership with IPC Technologies, Inc. The Richmond-based firm counts IP telephony as one of its specialties, and has a strong relationship with ShoreTel, a leading provider of IP telephony solutions.

"IPC introduced us to ShoreTel at one of their meetings about a year ago, and I was impressed," Nichols said. "That's when we started looking at it closely and building the business case to present to the board of directors."

Two major factors were time and money. The credit union needed frequent moves, adds and changes — MACs, in phone system parlance. Getting Verizon out to make changes to the Centrex lines would take days or weeks, while making changes to the PBXs required costly rewiring.

"We were probably spending anywhere from \$10,000 to \$12,000 a year just in phone moves," Nichols said. "With the IP telephony system we can handle all the MACs ourselves in minutes — even remotely through a browser-based interface."

## Smooth Sailing

IPC Technologies has completed phase one of the implementation at the credit union's new Hidenwood branch. Nichols says the project is on track and going very smoothly.

"The integration and the support we've gotten from IPC and their technicians has been just great," he said, "and we haven't had any problems with the ShoreTel equipment. ShoreTel is a very good solution and they have a very good partner in IPC. We're rolling out equipment in all of our branches right now so

we should have the project completed in the next three to four months."

Bay Port Federal Credit Union plans to use IP telephony in its contact center, which handles 30,000 to 35,000 calls per month. In addition, the technology will enable the credit union to connect all its branches via a single system.

"We have close to 300 people now in locations throughout the greater Tidewater area. We're building new branches in Gloucester and Williamsburg this year," Nichols said. "The beauty of the IP telephony system is that we can connect everyone across our wide area network, a high-speed line that carries voice and data. We won't be dependent on Verizon's Centrex system at all — we'll be able to manage the system and give everyone the features they need."

## In the Swim

The ShoreTel IP telephony system offers end-users powerful functionality. Any phone on the network can easily be transformed into a user's personal extension, and the "find me" feature eliminates missed calls. Advanced call handling, notifications and other features increase productivity and create an efficient, professional telephone "persona."

While the ShoreTel system can support traditional analog phone sets, Bay Port Federal Credit Union decided to replace its desktop equipment as well.

"We're putting in all new IP phones," Nichols said. "That makes it a little more expensive initially but we elected to make an investment in the future. The system is so scalable that we can easily add more phones without bringing in a forklift, as they say."

Replacing legacy systems is never easy, but Bay Port Federal Credit Union is enjoying a smooth and successful transition to IP telephony thanks to IPC Technologies and ShoreTel. In the final analysis, this positive sea change comes down to strong relationships.

"We've been dealing with IPC for close to 15 of their 25 years in business, and they've always steered us in the right direction. I felt like their partnership with ShoreTel would benefit us as well," Nichols said. "In this day and time, a technology vendor that is in business for that long clearly has the right kind of service model. We're not a big business, so we really rely on them. The relationship has been very valuable to us."

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