



## Business Benefits in the Cloud

With the help of IPC, ColonialWebb migrates from an on-premises to a cloud-based phone system, reducing costs and gaining greater resilience.



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ColonialWebb builds, installs and services building mechanical systems for commercial and industrial customers. The company's expertise spans plumbing, electrical, HVAC, refrigeration, water and process piping systems. As a subsidiary of Comfort Systems USA, ColonialWebb is part of a nationwide network of contractors with extensive industry experience and technical expertise.

With the help of IPC, ColonialWebb had implemented an on-premises Mitel phone system several years ago. Although that system was still functioning, ColonialWebb was concerned about the “hub-and-spoke” architecture of its communications infrastructure. If the system in headquarters were to go down, the nine remote service locations that relied on that system would be without service.

“If our customers can't call us for service, then our service operations are effectively out of business. We knew from a business continuity standpoint and just from an aging infrastructure standpoint that we needed to do something different,” said Joe Piacentino,

Chief Financial Officer, ColonialWebb. “So we worked with IPC to identify what might be the right solution.”

ColonialWebb looked at cloud-based phone systems from Mitel and one other manufacturer. The company decided to stick with Mitel's technology and looked to IPC for assistance with design, implementation and ongoing support.

“We don't have the in-house resources to support our phone system, to custom configure workflows or troubleshoot if something goes wrong. We always had to have a third-party vendor to support us in that,” Piacentino said. “With the cloud, we have somebody else responsible for maintaining the infrastructure as well so we don't have to rely so much on our in-house IT.”

### CUSTOMIZED SOLUTION

Some midmarket and enterprise organizations have been reluctant to move to a cloud-based communications platform out of concern that they'll lose the ability to custom-

ize the system. IPC was able to design a solution to meet ColonialWebb's specific business requirements and to make changes as needed to accommodate user requests.

"There's nothing we've been unable to do," said Piacentino. "IPC worked closely with our IT manager to identify upfront what our needs were, what our existing call flows looked like, what our remote locations looked like. They were very responsive and helpful in getting it right. We absolutely couldn't have done it without them."

"We had a good idea of the network layout and what they needed, and worked with the IT team as well as the contacts at each of ColonialWebb's service locations to ensure that we weren't making any changes that would have a negative impact on the business," said Dave Sanchez, Vice President of National Cloud Services, IPC. "We wanted to make sure that we were improving their call flows, etc."

Of course, there are always things that users forget to tell the implementation team until after the infrastructure is in place. As just one example, ColonialWebb had a gate with a phone that drivers use to request access to the facility. Everybody forgot about that phone, which quit working when the new cloud-based system went live.

"We had to come up with a hybrid solution to support the gate application," Sanchez said. "We used a piece of the old phone system and connected it to the cloud system so the gate would function properly. We're planning to change it later so that we're not dependent on the old equipment but we got it working correctly."

## FLEXIBLE AND COST-EFFICIENT

While Piacentino left the technical aspects of the implementation to the experts, he was heavily involved in contract negotiations. He needed to ensure that the cloud-based solution would deliver high levels of availability — and that ColonialWebb could get out of the contract if it didn't.

"IPC brought us a really good contract to begin with, but we were able to negotiate something a little bit better," he said.

"Joe had prior experience with a carrier that charged some severe cancellation penalties," said Sanchez. "IPC helped make sure that the terms and conditions matched ColonialWebb's expectations."

The cloud-based phone system has been highly reliable, relieving the dependence on ColonialWebb's headquarters infrastructure. It also enables dispatchers to work from virtually any location that has an Internet connection if needed. On top of all that, the solution is saving the company a lot of money by eliminating the need to invest in an on-premises system, and pay for maintenance, support and carrier services.

"When you roll all of that in and compare it to what we're paying monthly now, it's almost \$200,000 a year in savings," Piacentino said. "When we were going through the pain of the changeover, I kept reminding the business leaders in each of our service locations that this is real material savings to our business."

"As with any change, it was a little bit painful getting it implemented, but now that it's up and working people are very happy. We're certainly happy with the cost-savings."

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