

CASE STUDY: RETAIL

LA-Z-BOY ENHANCES PRODUCTIVITY WITH HOSTED PHONE SYSTEM

"One type of phone, one service and one company to support it made a real difference."

- Deen Mustapha, Inventory and technology coordinator, La-Z-Boy



SUMMARY

Region:
Southern ON, CANADA

Industry:
Retail

Locations:
11+

Employees:
195

Business Challenges:

- Managing disparate phone systems across locations
- Costly & time consuming changes
- Merger required one easy to manage phone system

Solution:

- Hosted PBX – 129 seats
- Dedicated Access Circuits - 12

Key Result:

- Unified retail locations and distribution centres with the main office
- Maintenance free phone system
- Cost savings — saved thousands of dollars per year on phone system bills
- Improved employee productivity

BACKGROUND

La-Z-Boy, Inc. is a leading furniture producer and marketer of residential furniture, which it sells through a retail franchise model across North America. In 2008, La-Z-Boy merged with Metro West and BoomCo franchises, which are now all owned by BoomCo Décor Inc.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Consolidation of the BoomCo and MetroWest La-Z-Boy operations exposed an issue that is endemic to many companies that experience a period of rapid, inorganic growth — a jumble of heterogeneous technology systems and communications equipment in place at various locations.

A key hurdle for Deen Mustapha, La-Z-Boy's inventory and technology coordinator, was managing the disparate phone systems. As the company's single in-house IT staff resource, Deen found his time stretched by the need to understand and reprogram three different systems. He had to constantly bring in the original contractors for each location which he noted was "costly and time consuming".

When La-Z-Boy needed to standardize auto attendant messages and call routing options post-merger, Deen "had to consult four separate contractors to reprogram three different systems across ten locations." Plus, all the changes needed to be completed on site, so costs included travel time for him and for the person completing the recordings.

With further expansion to a new store and warehouse, La-Z-Boy decided to upgrade its telephone system so that it would ultimately link all locations across southern Ontario and unify operations through deployment of a single technology platform.

The company considered a number of in-house and off-site server options for the creation of a single phone system, but found the costs associated with these projects to be "astronomical"—and out of scope for their mid-sized business. After some investigative research, Deen knew that the adoption of a Hosted PBX system would provide a single phone system which could

be used in all locations and had the functionality he was looking for without the large capital investment involved in the deployment of an in-house solution.

SOLUTION

La-Z-Boy deepened its existing relationship with Primus — which they viewed as smaller than some of the other incumbent Canadian telecom providers and therefore more likely to deliver “personalized services.” In preparing the business case to senior management, Deen outlined the company’s challenges in unifying its multi-locations across southern Ontario and explained how a cloud-based PBX system could unify operations through a single technology platform without requiring ongoing maintenance. Deen also proved to management that the total operational costs with a hosted system would be competitive over time as “eventually we would have to replace legacy systems and hard lines because phone systems don’t last forever — they require maintenance.”

La-Z-Boy embarked on a 90 day trial run of Primus’ Hosted PBX at its Newmarket and Vaughan locations. Satisfied with the service stability, features, and functionality, the company proceeded with roll out of 129 seats installed in 11 locations across Southwestern Ontario: London, London Distribution Centre, Kitchener, Burlington, Oakville, Etobicoke, Vaughan, Vaughan Distribution Centre, Markham, Newmarket, and Scarborough.

KEY RESULTS

IT Productivity Gain: reduced travel & simplified admin

Prior to the adoption of Primus’ Hosted PBX, a key hurdle for Deen was managing the disparate PBX phone systems. Any phone system change required consultation from four separate contractors across ten locations, all of which needed to be completed on site so costs for changes always included consulting time, travel, and the actual time required for Deen and the consultants to complete the changes. Now, with Primus’ Hosted PBX, Deen is able to easily complete phone system changes from his office or when working remotely.

Substituting “one type of phone, one service and one company to support it made a real difference,” says Deen. With Hosted PBX, he is able to remotely administer phones, voice mail boxes, auto attendants, call routing, etc. through a single management console on his desktop, accessing 24/7 support from Primus when issues arise. As examples of simplified administration, Deen says the ability to port a

416 number to a 905 area code, which obviates the need to change phone numbers with geographic moves, was fantastic. In addition, procedures such as adding seats or users (in the case of business expansion), and the ultimate goal of using one centralized phone number for all locations to ease access to company resources for partners and customers “would have been impossible to do with the older phone systems,” noted Deen.

Sales & Customer Service Productivity Gain

Primus’ Hosted PBX features are generating additional productivity benefits for the company. A project that is currently underway to route calls according to staffing schedules will allow La-Z-Boy to rationalize deployment of human resources. Routing calls to a location that has a customer service rep available — providing costs savings for the company, and improved service quality to customers. “This setup would not have been possible without the support of our Hosted PBX,” Deen noted.

La-Z-Boy sales employees have also benefited from the reintroduction of voice mail, an essential communications tool that consultants are now more easily able to maintain since Hosted PBX escalates voice messages to email, a platform that sales staffs have generally tended to monitor on a more regular basis. Deen added that “reps are now always accessible” even when they are not in the store. Hosted PBX features such as Find Me, Follow Me, and voice messages to email have resulted in a reduction of missed sale opportunities and guaranteed delivery of each call. But the benefits extend beyond La-Z-Boy to their customers, who will receive better and more consistent communication with company resources, such as sales, billing and services, via advanced auto attendant capabilities based on centralized service delivery.

Lessons Learned

In Deen’s view, the key to successful deployment of new telephone systems is to have a clear sense of what capabilities are needed in advance. “By understanding your needs going into the meeting with you will allow the provider to help you build the solution that works best for your company, and which gets you up to speed and operating sooner,” he explained. That said, Deen also noted that providers such as Primus are continuously upgrading and adding features and functionality to their platform, so it is likely that customers will discover additional business applications that may not have been recognized as part of initial requirements.

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