



Primus' Hosted Phone System Merges Multi-Locations into One & Delivers Cost



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...employees in every department feel like they work for one organization.

*- Cameron Shaw,
IT Director, Collins Barrow*

SUMMARY

Region: GTA, Ontario

Industry: Accounting

Locations: Three

Employees: 250+

Solution:

- Hosted PBX - 247 phones
- 25 Softphones

Key Result:

- Successful integration of two companies
- Business agility
- Disaster recovery plan

BACKGROUND

Collins Barrow is one of Canada's largest Chartered Accounting firms, providing advice and a wide range of services that assist with profitability, tax minimization, and regulatory compliance.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Collins Barrow Toronto LLP was in the process of merging two firms under one company name. The 2009 merger was going to double the number of employees at the accounting firm. They had concerns around the future viability of their PBX phone system, which could only support 80 users at each location and did not allow for multi-office connectivity.

They wanted a solution that would unify both offices on one phone platform and provide direct extension dialing.

The first option they explored was a hybrid system that could leverage their existing infrastructure and provide some new features, but they found it expensive.

“If we had invested in [a hybrid phone system], we would have needed one in each location. Plus, licence fees made it challenging, as we would have had to incur redundant licence costs,” said Cameron Shaw, IT Director at Collins Barrow.

They also explored creating their own VoIP system, but Cameron said it was cost prohibitive as it required capital outlay and the in-house expertise to maintain it which would have been a steep learning curve for in-house staff.

“In the end, it was more expensive than bridging our existing technology,” said Cameron.

Because they needed to link the two offices and they required a data access solution with guaranteed speeds, they reached out to Primus Business Services. Through initial discussions around their data access needs, their Primus Business Account Manager inquired about the impact of the merger on their phones and presented an option that filled the gaps.

SOLUTION

Just prior to the merger, Primus Business Services provided Collins Barrow with a solution that delivered all the features and flexibility they wanted.



“We got our Hosted PBX system installed within an extremely short amount of time, and at a reasonable cost,” said Cameron. Collins Barrow was provisioned with a receptionist console, one Hosted PBX phone per employee and a phone for common areas and meeting rooms – totaling 247 phones – and nine Softphones for employees working remotely.

“We looked at the cost of renting vs. a capex for purchase, and it made logical sense for us to buy,” said Cameron. “The Hosted PBX purchase was less than investing in existing and building new. We could easily get all phones with extensions for all office, we got our full set of features, and there was no additional party required to make adds, changes, deletes, etc. Not having to bring in a technical expert offset the fees.”

Post-merger, the company found the synergy in the organization was adversely impacted from having two small offices, so a decision was made in 2010 to find one new, combined accommodation.

Because Collins Barrow already had a Primus Hosted PBX solution in place, there was no trouble meeting their tight timeline for another office move. As soon as construction of the new office was complete, Primus installed additional access circuits, along with all of the necessary hardware, at no additional cost to the firm.

During the move period, employees were able to work from home using Softphones and receive voicemail, since the Primus equipment providing this functionality was not on-site. The net result was zero downtime.

On actual move day, Collins Barrow staff simply unplugged and packed up their phones. IT plugged them into the new location and they were live immediately. All phones were set-up and ready to be used prior to any staff actually stepping foot into the new location.

KEY RESULTS

Successful Integration of Two Companies under One Phone System

With Primus’ Hosted PBX Phone System, Collins Barrow was able to replace their existing PBX phone system and merge two offices into one company.

“Because the system gives us the flexibility to move consoles and staff around, and provide direct extension dialing, employees in every department feel like they work for one organization vs. two separate ones,” said Cameron.

Empowering Remote Workers

Having the Primus Softphone companion allows Collins Barrow technical staff and partners to work from home or from the road.

“Primus personnel came in and got the infrastructure set up and configured overnight. This allowed our employees to work in a transparent mode wherever they were... which, as a result, shortened the employee adoption period of the new phone system,” said Cameron.

Confidence in Having a Built-in Disaster Recovery Plan

As the features of the Primus HPBX were built with disaster recovery in mind, it’s an added benefit for customers to leverage, versus having to think about building a separate plan.

“If there’s an emergency, we know we can make immediate changes and scale quickly to get operational again,” said Cameron.

“Part of our disaster recovery plan is ensuring there’s a help desk phone number made available to employees, and we know we change the voice recording when needed to ensure staff is kept informed...other systems we looked at didn’t include disaster recovery.”

With Primus’ turn-key solution, we got all the technical expertise and maximum flexibility for multilocation expansion without additional infrastructure costs.

– Cameron Shaw,
IT Director,
Collins Barrow

ABOUT PRIMUS BUSINESS SERVICES

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Canadian Businesses rely on Primus’ industry leading service and support commitment that delivers reliability, security and compliance. When you partner with Primus, you get access to a dedicated Account Representative and team of experts who will collaborate with you on your business requirements.

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