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LAMP modernizes with Digium Switchvox Cloud Services

St. Louis-based Linguistic Services Provider Saves Money with VoIP and Unified Communications in the Cloud

Language Access Multicultural People (LAMP) was suffering from outdated communication methods —until PhoneWire modernized them with Digium Switchvox Cloud Services.

The days of an office receptionist relying on a paper contact list and an old-school analog phone are long gone. In fact, running a business this way has actually been proven to damage a company's health and stunt its growth!

Unfortunately, there are still many small businesses out there suffering from the use of outdated operations.

Language Access Multicultural People (LAMP) was one of those companies suffering, particularly from outdated communication methods. Then they found a way to not only upgrade their business communications system but also save money by replacing their legacy phone system with Digium Switchvox Cloud Services.

About LAMP

LAMP started as part of a statewide mission offering free linguistic services to people who can't communicate with their legal or medical providers.

Over the years, they also began providing a variety of linguistic services including interpretation, translation, and introducing American Sign Language to hospitals, doctors' offices, clinics, law enforcement, city government, and law firms. The goal of the services is to help immigrants, refugees, and individuals with cultural or physical health barriers to communicate.

Over 80 percent of their business today is medical-related. The rest of their client base consists of law firms utilizing the service to ensure their non-English-speaking clients understand any legal action taken for or against them.

The original nonprofit division of the company has expanded to include helping individuals communicate within their local communities. LAMP offers free language assessments, education, and training. All services are provided via telephone, video remote, and in-person.

The Old Way of Doing Things

LAMP had a tedious and time-consuming way of doing business and communicating with its customers.

Here's what a typical phone call looked like for them:

1. **First, a call would come in from a hospital or medical clinic** with a Spanish-speaking patient requiring medical and insurance information to be conveyed in their native language.

2. **The attendant had to put that customer on hold** while they went down the list, using their only other analog phone line to call Spanish interpreters until they found one available. It took numerous calls to linguists up and down the list to find one who was immediately accessible — while the hospital representative waited on hold.

3. **LAMP would then pass along the phone number of their translator** to the hospital representative. A conference call would then have to be set up between the two parties (which also took quite a while).

As you can see, their process was very unproductive, and it resulted in a significant amount of time (and therefore money) being wasted.

The Problem: High-demand, Low-efficiency

Unable to grow at the rate of demand because their outdated telephones were limiting them in both time and efficiency, LAMP approached PhoneWire, a business communications provider and Digium Switchvox partner in nearby Fairview Heights, Illinois.

"We had reached a point of high volume where we didn't have enough interpreters to cover the assignments we had coming in," says Beatriz Nunez Hernandez, LAMP Community Outreach and Marketing Coordinator.

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LAMP was unable to grow at the rate of demand because they were limited by an outdated telephone system.

"We needed to expand but we were hesitant to do so because of the inefficiency of our phone and communications service. What we needed was complex and we did not know how to accomplish it in-house. We called PhoneWire and [they] came and presented a plan for creating and customizing a Digium Switchvox Cloud system to perfectly meet our unique needs."

PhoneWire helps small to medium-sized businesses find an affordable telephony solution, but they are especially known for their methodical and creative approach to every client's project. Because LAMP was moving from a very antiquated analog set-up with no IT technical staff onsite, [PhoneWire] was certain a Digium Switchvox Cloud System was the only phone system that could accommodate LAMP's rather sophisticated and complex needs.

"I sat down with Beatriz and her team, and when they explained to me how their current process worked, I knew I could automate it. I also knew Switchvox would be the best solution because of their unlimited call queues and customizable scripts," says PhoneWire president and CEO, Matt Rygelski.

Hernandez says, "We didn't have a budget for a new system and it took us a while to get out of our traditional phone contract; but after Matt and I discussed with our director all the tools and features we would gain from Switchvox, we were all in agreement this was the direction we needed to go." Among the many benefits of Switchvox, they discussed the system's capabilities for integrating a menu that assigned specific phone numbers to each of their clients; how they could set up language codes that directed calls to a call queue for any of the many languages we offer; and how the Switchvox hosted phone system could provide video and conferencing capabilities."

The Solution: Digium Switchvox and the Cloud

PhoneWire used Switchvox's flexibility to build call queues for each of LAMP's clients and their multiple locations, as well as for all of their interpreters. Queues were also implemented, for tech support in any language LAMP offers, and for individual callers seeking help in every language.

Every hospital, doctor's office, law firm, or government services organization providing linguistic services to its clients now benefits from having its own call queue. In total, LAMP has 180 call queues and it is still growing.

"When we started [working with them] over a year ago, LAMP had about seventy employees," says Rygelski. "They had twenty in the office and about fifty on-call field interpreters. Some of them could handle two or three languages, but since implementing their new Digium Switchvox Cloud system, **they have grown to over two hundred interpreters, five hundred clients, and now provide over one hundred languages.**"

He says, at last count, LAMP is receiving an average of 10,000 calls a month.

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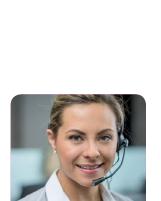
Matt Rygelski
President and CEO,
PhoneWire

The Result: More Efficient Operations with Better Organization, Reporting, and Support

"It has been a huge change for us but in a positive way," says Hernandez. "There are so many new features we are still learning, even after a year. Aside from the operational and structural benefits, Switchvox gives us organizational capabilities we never had before."

"It provides a lot of reporting information that makes it easy to manage and prepare for fluctuations in demand for certain languages. We can see when requests for some languages are growing in demand over request for languages that are diminishing over time."

"I can see who is logged in at any given time and I can see any and all calls when they come in. If there is an issue like, why did that caller hang up?, I can track back to see how long they were holding and who they were speaking to."

"Finally, if I need phone support, I don't have to call a phone repair person. I just pick up the phone and call PhoneWire to look into it."

With Switchvox, the Future for LAMP is Bright

"Now capable of reaching out to more organizations that need reliable and efficient linguistic connectivity, LAMP is planning to expand out of state and into other markets like Chicago and Springfield, Illinois," says Rygelski.

"They may be adding as many as 100 more queues and Digium's Switchvox is the only business communications solution with that much flexibility to grow exponentially without adding any more costs than licensing," says Rygelski.

In addition to the market expansion opportunity available with increased outreach capabilities in Switchvox, Hernandez and Rygelski look forward to one more area of potential growth.

"LAMP has just barely begun exploring the video aspects of the Switchvox product offering," Rygelski says. "The legal industry uses video frequently, and highly visual interpreting like American Sign Language for the deaf community will greatly benefit from more video service capabilities."

"Digium is at the forefront of video conferencing technology. They have expectations that within a couple of years, LAMP will be able to use their iPads®, laptops, and smart devices to communicate with their interpreters using video. PhoneWire looks forward to that great partnership."

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