

Berkeley Research Group

GLOBAL CONSULTING FIRM DUMPS DROPPED CALLS AND OUTAGES IN FAVOR OF STABLE, SECURE AND SCALABLE CLOUD SERVICE



CHALLENGE

Berkeley Research Group, employer of 850 people in 30 offices around the world, was stuck on a VoIP system that was very rudimentary in terms of features and functionality. To make matter worse, they were experiencing issues with both scalability and instability.

"It got very choppy, very jittery. And as our business continued to grow, it put more and more stress on the existing platform," stated Chip Goodman, VP of Information Technology. "The platform also didn't integrate well with Microsoft Outlook."

The issues went from annoying to business-impacting; with dropped calls, packet loss, and significant outages, quality of service was terrible. Problems would often take months to get resolved, if they were resolved at all. It was so bad, employees were conducting calls from their mobile phones to avoid using the company phone system. With BRG at risk losing business because of poor service, they began to take steps toward bringing much needed stability to their voice infrastructure.

"We want to adopt and extend state of the art technologies that solve the business problems not only for us, but for our clients."
Chip Goodman, VP of IT

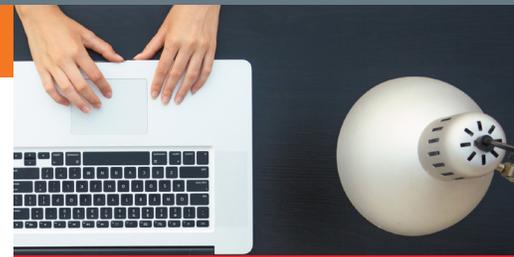
After doing some preliminary research, BRG came to the conclusion that hosted services would be the way to go. They issued an RFP for voice and collaboration, specifying a cloud solution, and included a request for network information as well.

BRG reviewed responses from several vendors in the unified communications as a service marketplace, developing a list of eight potential vendors, which they promptly narrowed to six, and then again to three. Working with their internal technology advisory group, extensive interviews were conducted with those three candidates, including West.

SOLUTION

West teamed with Cisco to respond, working together to provide a complete portfolio of solutions that covered BRG's diverse communications needs. VoiceMaxx CE, based on Cisco's Hosted Collaboration Solution (HCS), was proposed for voice and collaboration, along with Maxxis, a next generation application-aware network service that would boost the firm's network performance and enhance the quality of the voice services. Cisco WebEx,

Berkeley Research Group comprises highly credentialed experts, prominent academics, CPAs, experienced business leaders, former government officials, and seasoned consultants with a deep understanding of economics, finance, statistics, public policy, and business strategy. Its experts regularly provide commentary on the most pressing and complex issues in today's marketplace. BRG is headquartered in Emeryville, California, with offices across the United States and in Asia, Australia, Canada, Latin America, and the United Kingdom.



Collaboration Meeting Room and InterCall conferencing services rounded out the proposal. The combined value proved to be compelling.

“The future of IT management is truly to fuel the business. We’ve experienced about a 20% growth in the last 18 months. Technology, from my perspective, is a key part of that. It enables the business to expand but also to focus on the clients.” Chip Goodman, VP of IT

BRG visited West's executive briefing center, where they were able to observe the network and voice operations centers (NOC/VOC) in action, and met with executive leadership.

“Comparing the features, the functionality, the security, as well as the direction and the alignment of our companies, West was the obvious choice.” Chip Goodman, VP of IT

Using an aggressive timeline, the West implementation team began moving sites over from the existing phone and network service. All was going according to plan until the incumbent voice and network provider unexpectedly announced they would be cutting BRG's remaining services earlier than scheduled, which would have left a good portion of the company without voice or data services for a week. Within 24 hours, the West team rolled out voice and network services to the remaining locations, adding 11 locations, porting 500 phone numbers, and deploying 400 additional VoiceMaxx CE licenses to avoid any downtime.

RESULTS

BRG strives to run an extremely lean operation, so selecting the right business partners is key. That's why hosted unified communications is an excellent fit. VoiceMaxx CE and Jabber have reduced costs while also letting the company to grow quickly and securely.

Goodman explained, “It allows us to scale our business effectively while gaining support and engineering services that we don't have in house.” BRG also appreciated West's redundant data centers and liked having voice, data and internet traffic all on a single, reliable network.

At any given time, several consultants are out in the field and onsite at customer locations. Now, BRG's consultants are able to work from anywhere, instantly connecting with colleagues and clients from around the globe whenever needed using voice, IM, video, and desktop sharing.

If an issue pops up, with another client or back at the office, the consultants have access to all of their tools and their data. They can login remotely via Cisco Expressway from their laptop or mobile phone, taking their desk phone DIDs wherever they go. And whether remote or in the office, they enjoy dependable service.

“We can now make split second decisions that really move the needle for us and drive our bottom line here at BRG,” Chip acknowledged. “Our experts really, truly enjoy the experience, not only with Jabber, but the actual Cisco telephones as well. The clarity of the voice, the fidelity in the conference rooms is unmatched.”

“West is an integral business partner for the firm and part of our business. We've got a great business partner that we can leverage and scale to our business.” Chip Goodman, VP of IT

He continued, “Our experts are able to collaborate more than they have in the past. Whether it's collaboration using instant messaging, video, and obviously voice, with the Jabber client loaded on laptops, smartphones and tablets, they're able to connect to their colleagues and their clients anywhere in the world.”