

St. Elizabeth Physicians

WEST UNITES 98 OFFICES AND FREES IT STAFF TO FOCUS ON CORE BUSINESS



SITUATION

St. Elizabeth Physicians is a multi-provider healthcare organization and is part of St. Elizabeth Healthcare. The company was formed through the merger of two physicians groups about five years ago. Since that time, St. Elizabeth has gone through rapid growth, acquiring over 50 offices in the greater Cincinnati, Oh., area.

“One of our problems initially was that we had inherited a bunch of used phone systems and at the same time were growing at 15-20 offices opening per year,” said Mark Hoover, Chief Information Officer for St. Elizabeth Physicians. “The longer we waited the more legacy phone systems we would have to upgrade.”

Many of the acquired phone systems were at their end of life and had expired maintenance contracts. The company didn't want to have to keep sinking money into capital expenditures that were already underperforming.

“The impact of these phone systems on our business has been very high,” Hoover said. “This is due to the fact that it is old and aging equipment and that there was no common platform. It was negatively affecting our business and had a high amount of visibility throughout the organization.”

St. Elizabeth also had a relatively small IT department that was burdened with the task of maintaining these phone systems the best they could while continuing with their daily strategic duties. They knew it was time for an upgrade, and considered the options of a cloud-based and premise-based solution.

“We looked at going to a premise-based solution, but trying to put one together for 98 offices over three states seemed like a monumental effort,” Hoover said. “What really drove us to the cloud-based platform was avoiding the high upfront cost of bringing in a premises-based solution. We had to get it done quickly. We needed to have access to a state of the art phone system and needed a good solution that could allow our small IT department to stay focused on our core business that we prefer.”

SOLUTION

St. Elizabeth chose West as their provider of hosted voice services for their 98 offices and contact centers. Leveraging their preference for Cisco technology, their need for flexibility and capital expenditure considerations, West UC installed VoiceMaxx CE for voice and also ControlMaxx to drive their contact centers.

HQ: Crestview Hills, Ky.

St. Elizabeth Physicians is the multi-specialty physician organization of St. Elizabeth Healthcare, one of the oldest, largest, and most respected medical providers in the Greater Cincinnati region. With more than 200 physicians, 50 mid-level providers, and more than 1,100 employees, the group delivers high levels of patient centered medical care to residents of Northern Kentucky, SouthWest UC Ohio, and Southeast Indiana. Their network features about 100 physician offices conveniently located across the tri-state area.

Solutions: VoiceMaxx CE, Maxxis, ControlMaxx, MaxxConnect



VoiceMaxx CE is a hosted voice solution built on the Cisco HCS platform. St. Elizabeth was leaning toward Cisco technology based on the fact that it facilitated applications they wanted, like telemedicine and point-to-point video. Some offices are also using the Maxxis Application Aware Network Solution for data connections to the cloud and MaxxConnect trunking services.

As a Leader in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for UCaaS North America, West was able to deliver the voice and data services on a single platform, bringing together all of the St. Elizabeth offices, regardless of size or distance. With only three companies listed as leaders, the Magic Quadrant demonstrates West UC's ability to execute and completeness of vision in hosted deployments to potential clients.

"We did our due diligence when we selected this technology," Hoover said. "We looked at on-prem solutions vs. cloud and did a seven year cost comparison between the two. In the end we went with a cloud-based solution because it fit our DNA. We're a fast moving company, we move around a lot and we cover a lot of area."

Very early on during the discovery period, St. Elizabeth was building a new office in Aurora, In., and it was a good opportunity to try out a new cloud-based phone system while they were going through the selection process.

"We had the office up and running within 30 days and the response to the phone solution was absolutely incredible," Hoover said. When it came time to make the decision and expand the installation across the entire company, the work done by West UC in the Aurora office helped St. Elizabeth gain confidence about their decision.

"It made us comfortable – sometimes you look at the technology brochures and marketing, but you really don't know what you're buying. We had the experience with the cloud-based solution under our belts so when it got to the point where we were going to make a recommendation of what we were going to go with, we felt confident with the recommendation we gave to our board of directors."

RESULTS

Mark Hoover says one of the biggest benefits of going with West for the cloud-based system was the company offered the resources and support at the installation phase to get the system up and running quickly and efficiently.

"They put together the resources where we could cut over 57 offices and did it in the timeline of about eight months," Hoover said. "All the while, we acquired eight additional offices and were actually able to get those offices up and running without impacting the timeline of the project at all."

The benefits of a cloud-based system for St. Elizabeth have been evident in several areas, according to Hoover:

- **Reducing extraneous expenditures** – "We were able to go to every office we had and get rid of a whole bunch of phone lines, including PRIs and trunking lines. This also got rid of a lot of costs."
- **Better reporting and monitoring** – "We also had been collecting satisfaction stats from customers before and after the installation. With the Cisco phones in place and support from West, it was interesting to note that once we had all of the offices up we saw dramatic changes in these statistics – specifically in the areas of average patient wait times, abandoned calls and overall patient satisfaction. We've been continuing to monitor these statistics and the trend hasn't gone down yet."
- **Disaster recovery** – "We're also able to utilize resources outside of our office. We began to put together plans for disaster recovery. With West we were able to partner up primary offices so if we did have a fiber cut or lost service to a primary office, we weren't going to lose that call. We can quickly contact West and have those calls routed to a partner office and within minutes the calls can start being diverted."

From a healthcare standpoint, St. Elizabeth Physicians remains an example of how a group of dispersed physician's offices can be brought together under a single hosted platform to improve the productivity, efficiency and agility of the organization as a whole.

"We were very comfortable with our solution," Hoover said. "I sleep very well at night."