

Case Study:



Collins Engineers Challenge

Like many professional services firms, widely dispersed Collins Engineers needed to meet new client demands without breaking the bank. “Our customers were beginning to require electronic deliverables,” recalls Manus Cowley, the firm’s vice president of IT. “Plus we were sharing ever-larger 3-D CAD les between offices over 1.5 Mbps T1 MPLS lines, which constrained our ability to operate.”

When Cowley began discussing the situation with trusted partner Eclipse Telecom, a larger conversation ensued. “We wanted to ensure we addressed Collins’ needs of today and tomorrow,” says Dave Dyson, CEO and chief communications strategist for Eclipse. “Collins was also struggling with legacy telephony and the inability to take advantage of cloud-enabled options for day-to-day operations and business continuity.”

Creating an Affordable Solution

At Collins headquarters, Cogent was tapped for 1 GBps of DIA to enable communications with the firm’s clients, satellite offices and distant data center in Milwaukee. The next largest pipe, 100 Mbps also from Cogent, serves Collins’ Seattle location. Another 10 offices have 20-50 Mbps of fiber, depending upon needs, from a combination of sources: ACC Business, Comcast Business, FairPoint (now Consolidated Communications), Level 3 and Time Warner Cable (now Spectrum Business, post Charter Communications merger).

At six other locations – where fiber was cost-prohibitive, or upload needs were less intense – Collins opted for broadband from Cox Communications, Global Capacity and Home Telecom. In a final location, Virginia Beach, Virginia, Verizon provides a 50 Mbps DSL connection.

Military Site Requires Extra TLC

Beyond challenges related to project management logistics and negotiating contracts favorable to Collins, Eclipse faced two other hurdles. First, a process breakdown at ACC, which threatened to create a significant delay. Through its relationships, Eclipse effectively escalated the issue to ACC’s CEO to ensure appropriate attention and resolution.

The other challenge involved access and permitting for a Collins location situated within a military base. “As a highly secure facility, the base required more documentation and clearances than a typical landlord right of entry (RoE) situation,” says Dyson. “We worked with both Collins and the military to resolve concerns, which kept the project on track.”

Less Communications Tag, Happier Customers

For Collins, the benefits are nothing short of transformative. “Previously, our IT operation was distributed, which resulted in every office functioning autonomously,” Cowley says. “Now that we’ve centralized, it enables interoffice collaborations like never before.”

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Improved bandwidth is also enabling cloud technology adoption, starting with RingCentral UCaaS. “On average, 65 percent of our engineers are in the field at any given time, which spikes to 80 percent during warm months,” explains Cowley. “With RingCentral, clients use one number to reach an engineer wherever they are, by voice, text or fax, improving customer and employee experiences alike.”

Cowley sees even more benefits going forward. “Our new fiber infrastructure is saving us money and enabling us to consider moving various processes and systems to the cloud, such as our Deltek ERP system,” he says. “In IT, we’re transitioning from firefighting to concentrating on providing value-added services. It’s a win for our business all around.”