

Major City's search for a Call Accounting and Wireless Management solution

**Industry:**

Public Sector

Location:

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Customer Profile:

One of the top 50 largest modern cities in the US and ranked as a top technology city. 911 and 311 operations manage hundreds of calls per day to departments best suited for responding to citizen inquiries.

Solutions:

Wireless Expense Management, Call Accounting

BACKGROUND

The City of Minneapolis is one of the top 50 large modern cities in the US and is also ranked as a top technology city. In a given week, the City's Telecom Operations typically handles thousands of calls. 911 and 311 operations manage hundreds of calls per day to the various departments best suited for responding to citizen inquiries.

Overseeing the City's Telecom Operations is Business Information Services (BIS). Their mission includes: 1) implementing information technology solutions that meet business needs, and 2) providing cost-effective, efficient and reliable information services.

To that end, BIS set out to upgrade their aging telecommunications and networking infrastructure. Included in the overhaul was the need to update their Telecom Expense Management efforts.

In 2008, Calero's Integrated Telecom Management platform was added, in cooperation with Black Box, when the City looked to upgrade its Call Accounting services and add Wireless Device Management.

CHALLENGES

BIS identified several key improvements necessary for their Telecom Expense Management initiative.

- Update expense management system to be congruent with upgrades in the platform
- Existing vendor upgrade costs, customizations, training, configuration changes and maintenance were viewed as extremely expensive.
- Improve difficult and time-consuming chargeback systems/processes
- Control escalating costs
- Upgrade to include wireless reporting capabilities
- Upgrade to include several custom reports not previously available

BIS had an incumbent call accounting vendor, but needed a solution for wireless. While conducting due diligence, BIS concluded the vendor's performance was below expectations. Additionally, the incumbent vendor quoted expensive custom changes and upgrades for almost everything required. The system was cumbersome to use and reports didn't meet requirements. There were also problems with lost data.

"During implementation we really liked their approach to getting things done as well as their ability to create custom reports...The chargeback billing report was exactly what we needed."

- City of Minneapolis BIS implementation team

CASE STUDY

For wireless expense management, BIS used an Access database and manual processes to manage billing and inventory. They also relied on their service provider to measure efficiencies and identify savings. Above all else, a system for billing with chargebacks was the biggest requirement.

SOLUTION

A decision was made to add integrated Call Accounting & Wireless Management from Calero, including the required customization capabilities the City needed. The specifics of the solution included:

- Hosted solution – no need for internal IS resources.

Prior to the actual implementation, BIS had done some up front work to learn about and document their organizational structure. We assigned a project manager who took BIS through everything.

Conducting regular status meetings, the project manager focused only on the issues that were key to getting the implementation done quickly and effectively.

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- City of Minneapolis representatives

- Update Call Accounting Management to reflect upgrades in platform
- Add Wireless Management
- Integrate into one comprehensive platform.
- Ability to inventory and manage all wireless devices
- Custom reports for 311 transfers to manage efficiency of service
- Custom reports for bill-backs to various city departments
- Investigate areas for potential savings and increased efficiencies.

The hosted application also made things easy. Other than a few buffer boxes that were installed, there were no issues with legacy integration, servers, firewalls and no additional software or hardware needed. This was especially important given that BIS outsourced IT to a third party.

BIS had strict requirements for the custom reporting features the City needed and we successfully implemented all of them to their exact specifications.

Finally, multiple training sessions were held before the new application went live.

CASE STUDY

City representatives shared, “They have this customer for life philosophy, which is really good. Soon after we met, we realized it was like a breath of fresh air. When it came to the solution, they presented some options that were hard to ignore. During implementation, we liked their approach to getting things done as well as their ability to create custom reports. The chargeback billing report was exactly what we needed. Their experience with providers was another real strong point. We had very favorable rates, but we knew we weren’t catching some of the things that would save us money.”

RESULTS

One of the more significant results included the ability to predict monthly budgets with greater accuracy and to help with the annual budgeting process. BIS was able to run special reporting on 311 calls and transfers to internal departments. The data is now used to assure proper resources are in place and to improve first call resolution rates.

For wireless, the City receives great rates, so it was more about finding inefficiencies. The carrier rep had reported 90-95% efficiency. At those levels, BIS really didn’t see a need to dig much deeper. However, after running the numbers, we discovered their actual efficiency was closer to 75% and made recommendations for closing that gap.

Bottom-line: Despite the City having very low government rates, fairly good existing pool utilization, and a high percentage of data devices, we were able to uncover savings of 13.3% or many thousands per month.

Calero Software, LLC

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