INTER-TEL®

Case Study

RLI Corp. Peoria, Illinois

PROVIDING CUSTOMERS WITH INNOVATIVE INSURANCE SOLUTIONS

Founded in 1961, RLI (www.rlicorp.com) is a leading specialty insurance organization based in Peoria, Illinois. The company is well known for its original products, superior service and implementation of cutting-edge technology. RLI serves its customers through its 17 branch offices in 16 cities across the country. With a reported $800 million in revenues in 2003, RLI's continued success depends on reliable communications for effective business operations and stellar customer service. RLI is committed to providing their employees with the best possible tools to help them achieve their business goals.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE– FINDING A RELIABLE, COST-EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

A flourishing organization, RLI outgrew their 15-year-old phone system. They required a provider with a reliable, feature-rich communications solution that would grow with them as their business expanded. They needed a single provider solution to streamline communications, lower monthly service contracts, allow for in-house administration and improve call center operations. They also required the flexibility to gradually install communications platforms in all of their branches as service contracts expired with other vendors.

"We had the old system since 1982," explained Bret Gauwitz, RLI telecommunications coordinator. "It wasn't Y2K compliant or E911 compliant. We were having capacity issues with how many phones we were having off the system. We were experiencing downtime—more and more frequently."

THE INTER-TEL SOLUTION– PROVIDING A FLEXIBLE PLATFORM DESIGNED FOR FUTURE GROWTH

After an extensive cross-country search for a communications provider that could address all of RLI's business challenges, RLI chose Inter-Tel and Digital Network Development Companies (DNDC), an Inter-Tel solutions provider in Peoria, Illinois. DNDC installed Inter-Tel converged platforms at RLI's home office and networked several of their branches back to the home office—improving efficiency and reducing long distance costs.

"They were looking at a cost-effective way to reduce their long distance dialing to the branches, which is now being addressed through networking," said John Calderon, DNDC partner/chief operating officer.

"The biggest costs savings we had is in maintenance," said Richard Diekemper, RLI director of real estate/facilities. RLI was required to carry maintenance contracts with other vendors, and they were conttinually at RLI's corporate office making changes to their systems.

FAST FACT...

RLI deployed an Inter-Tel platform and integrated applications for improved employee productivity and customer care.

"With the Inter-Tel solution," Diekemper continued, "we're able to send Bret Gauwitz to training classes so he can do adds, moves, changes and most of the programming himself. That's probably saved us approximately $20,000 a year for Bret to do the changes himself in a timely manner—without having outside people doing that for us like we were required to do with our old vendor." Gauwitz agreed the flexibility to set up new users, voice mail accounts and passwords on the same day requested from the branches is extremely beneficial and efficient.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE–ARMING EMPLOYEES WITH THE TOOLS THEY NEED FOR INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY AND SERVICE

RLI's corporate location was handling an extremely high volume of calls a day. "Our old system required us to manually handle calls 80 percent of the time. Only 20 percent of our call handling was automated," said Gauwitz.

RLI also had several call centers that handled approximately 1,000 calls a week. Call center supervisors required tools that enabled them to make informed business decisions.

THE INTER-TEL SOLUTION–STREAMLINING BUSINESS PROCESSES WITH INTEGRATED APPLICATIONS

"Today, incoming calls to RLI corporate are handled by one person because of the Inter-Tel platform's Automated Attendant feature and integrated Inter-Tel Attendant Console software," explained Calderon. The Automated Attendant automatically routes calls to the correct person or department 24/7 so there is less demand on the receptionist.

Should a call come into the receptionist, Inter-Tel Attendant Console software enables her to quickly route calls, initiate conferences and view the Presence, or availability, of her coworkers before transferring calls—for improved efficiency and caller experience. "Attendant Console has significantly changed and increased the receptionist's productivity. She can see when someone is in Do-Not-Disturb, why they're gone and how long they're going to be out—and relay that information to the customer," said Gauwitz.

RLI also received third-party call center solutions through Inter-Tel's Managed Services program that provide real-time and historical reports, as well as agent monitoring capabilities to improve customer service. "The supervisors can now run reports and make decisions based on that data," explained Diekemper. "Supervisors are now informed of busy times. They can more easily monitor abuse on the lines and have visibility into calls," added Gauwitz.

WHY INTER-TEL

"We looked at a number of different systems. Our technology people were telling us that telephony systems were becoming more computer-based as opposed to PBX-based types of systems. We wanted to look at what the latest technologies were, what was going to be reliable and what was going to satisfy our needs. At that time we looked at several systems and it seemed like Inter-Tel had the most value and features for the cost of the system," stated Diekemper.

"They didn't just pick a phone system," said Calderon. "They went out and investigated the technology that would take them down the path of newer technology arising in years to come. They knew that down the road they'd be connecting locations via the Internet. They understood the Inter-Tel platform would take them there with the simplicity of convergence without a major forklift upgrade. We're continuously adding resources to their existing investment, which has taken them beyond what their anticipated growth was. This shows them a return on investment on their product."

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