INTER-TEL®

Case Study

Neighborhood Credit Union Dallas, Texas

CONNECTING NEIGHBORS TO PROFITS

Connecting neighbors to savings, loan and checking accounts is what Neighborhood Credit Union is all about.

A Texas-based organization, Neighborhood Credit began as a one-office Dallas Postal Credit Union—offering services only to postal workers and their families. During the 1980s, thanks to a new community charter and deregulation of financial institutions, the credit union was able to also offer affordable and convenient services to people who lived or worked within eight miles of their branch locations. Neighborhood Credit Union now has more than 30,000 members, six locations and assets over $180 million.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE–CONFRONTING GROWTH

"We experienced tremendous and rapid growth throughout the past 20 years," emphasized Lou Ann Warren, senior vice president. "We're pretty proud of that growth, but it happened so fast we literally patched together our phone and data systems."

"We're a credit union, which means we don't have customers. We have members," stated Warren. "Anyone who uses our services has a say in how the company is managed, so it's essential that we have a reliable, durable communications platform. If someone calls in wanting to check on an account and the system is down, it's not just a matter of poor customer service. It's also poor investor relations."

Two years ago they began shopping around for a system that could easily network their locations, rapidly send data between locations, grow with the company and easily adjust to changing needs and demands. They were also looking at this new system as an investment—not a purchase. "We have to justify our costs to our members," said Warren. "We needed to make sure that we could prove that the solution we chose would provide productivity gains and a legitimate return on investment."

FAST FACT...

Neighborhood Credit Union implemented Inter-Tel IP networking, IP phones, call center software and an Inter-Tel platform to address the challenges of their rapidly growing business.

THE INTER-TEL SOLUTION

Inter-Tel offered a package that included IP networking, IP phones, improved call center and tracking software, an in-house maintenance program, long distance rate discounts and a financial program designed to defray start-up costs.

"You wouldn't think as little as we are that we're as complex as we are, and Inter-Tel understood that," said Warren. "They came up with a package that addressed all of our needs, while also enabling us to increase productivity, enhance customer service and cut costs. In a nutshell, our Inter-Tel system is by far faster, less expensive and more efficient than what we had before."

WHY INTER-TEL

"We had Inter-Tel phones in some of our locations, so naturally we opened up the bid to them as well as everyone else in the market," said Warren. "Inter-Tel took it a step further than everyone else. They immediately picked up on what was important to us—our concerns as well as our needs. They put together the perfect solution for us and then offered to buy back their old phones. To help us remain within our budget, they even came up with a financing program that made it all possible. We knew from dealing with them in the past that we could trust them to follow through on their offers."

Another factor that was important to the credit union was that installation be a seamless operation to its employees and members. "It was all transparent to our members," said Warren. "We were very comfortable with the speed of everything and the service we received. There were no interruptions. Plus, the training we received on how to manage the system ourselves was extremely helpful and cost effective. We're just rocking and rolling with it."

Despite today's economy, the Neighborhood Credit Union expects to continue its growth and plans to open another office early next year. While it's currently not needed, the company is researching its future communications options, including videoconferencing and enhanced-features software.

"One of my favorite aspects of the Inter-Tel system is its ability to upgrade and grow with us," said Warren. "Previously, we had a contract with another company that just quit supporting us because we outgrew what they originally sold us, so all of a sudden we had all these phones and no system. We know that won't happen with Inter-Tel, plus we can turn to them to help us with any of our communications needs—not just our telephones. They've earned our trust and respect."

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