INTER-TEL®

Case Study

Virginia Blood Services (VBS) Richmond, Virginia

PROVIDING SAFE AND RELIABLE BLOOD SUPPLIES FOR 30 YEARS

Established in 1974, Virginia Blood Services (www.vablood.org) is a private, nonprofit corporation providing reliable blood products to help save the lives of patients in hospitals and medical centers throughout central Virginia. VBS employs over 200 people, operates eight donor centers and conducts nearly 2,200 blood drives a year.

As the sole supplier of blood products for central Virginia, with dispersed donor centers and employees, it is imperative that Virginia Blood Services have a reliable communications system that connects them to the hospitals they serve as well as to the donor volunteer community.

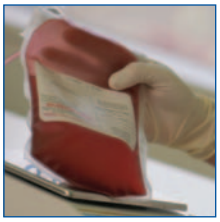
THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE–UNIFYING DISPERSED LOCATIONS AND EMPLOYEES

"Our old phone system was obsolete. It was a 10-year old system that really wasn't serving the needs of the company, which was a business challenge in and of itself," commented Tom Smith, Virginia Blood Services director of information technology. With over eight dispersed donor centers, Virginia Blood Services needed a unified communications system that was reliable and would grow with them as their organization grew over time—a system that wouldn't be obsolete in 10 years.

THE INTER-TEL SOLUTION

Virginia Blood Services looked at several vendors, but in the end, Inter-Tel's ability to act as a single-source provider of communications solutions and services met their requirements. Responding to Virginia Blood Services' communications needs, Inter-Tel's Richmond direct sales office provided a scalable, Inter-Tel advanced communications platform that will allow VBS to grow their organization should their needs change. The Inter-Tel system also enabled VBS to deploy a variety of technologies at the same time, including Internet Protocol (IP). VBS chose to connect remote donor centers together using Inter-Tel's IP phones over the WAN data network to reduce costs.

The Inter-Tel platform was also advantageous because of its unified dialing plan, common voice mail system and automated attendant capabilities. Smith elaborated, "It's always a big help when you can provide new capabilities at a much lower cost. The ability for people here to be able to dial four-digit extensions and get to other locations, and also forward and receive voice mails on a common voice mail system is a big help." Smith also stated that VBS previously received numerous complaints about missed and abandoned calls. "Now, with the help of our new Inter-Tel automated attendant, I haven't heard any complaints of missed calls. We have a pretty extensive script in the auto attendant that people can go through and get routed to the right department or person. We used it a lot during Hurricane Isabel to keep people informed about how and where we were operating during the crisis," explained Smith.



FAST FACT...

VBS deployed an Inter-Tel custom IVR solution to cost-effectively reach out to donors when critical blood supplies are low.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE–COST-EFFECTIVELY REACHING VOLUNTEER DONORS

As the organization that coordinates the largest volunteer effort in central Virginia—last year more than 50,000 different volunteers donated blood with VBS—its volunteer recruitment group needed a reliable, cost-effective campaign dialer. Smith explained, "We had a campaign dialer, many years old, and there were several problems with it. A lot of the technical support had gone away. There were daily problems with the dialer and we really needed support." "The bottom line," Smith continued, "was that the dialer was costing a lot and not really meeting our needs."

THE INTER-TEL SOLUTION

To address Virginia Blood Service's donor campaign needs, the Inter-Tel Custom Solutions (ICS) group provided a customized campaign dialer. ICS is an Inter-Tel professional services group that develops a broad range of turnkey, custom Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and Computer Telephony (CT) solutions built with the company's industry-leading software and hardware products.

The Inter-Tel Campaign Dialer enables VBS to run their outbound dialing campaigns more effectively and reliably. Paula Rothe, ICS business solutions sales manager explained, "Whenever VBS is running low on a particular blood supply, for example A-positive, they load a call list of donors with that particular blood type. Inter-Tel's Campaign Dialer application automatically dials donors on the call list, and when it connects to a live person—not an answering machine or a busy signal—the call is transferred to a live representative in their recruitment group." Additionally, VBS can run multiple outbound dialing campaigns simultaneously, and donor information is screen-popped to the recruitment group, increasing business efficiencies.

WHY INTER-TEL

Virginia Blood Services needed a single-source communications provider that could address all of their business challenges. Joe Martin, account manager at Inter-Tel's Richmond direct sales office explained, "Virginia Blood Services had several challenges that they revealed to us. One issue was that their previous solutions were offered by two separate companies, which caused a lot of problems in terms of costs and administering the phone system. They wanted to find a company who could service and supply both the system and applications—and Inter-Tel was able to address these business requirements."

Smith continued, "We looked at quite a few other vendors. It was a combination of lower costs and capabilities like the customized campaign dialer, the interfaces to PRIs, IP telephones, auto attendant, the Caller ID by number and unified messaging capabilities that led us to Inter-Tel."

Coupled with being able to provide all of the communications solutions that VBS required, Inter-Tel enabled VBS to reduce monthly communications expenditures. Smith added, "We reduced our maintenance costs significantly and improved the daily operation of our organization. Inter-Tel was also able to bundle our local and long distance telephone service and cut monthly costs by about 60 percent."

With a flexible communications system, reliable campaign dialer and lower monthly communications costs, Virginia Blood Services is confident their mission-critical business operations will run more efficiently—enabling them to serve their community for years to come.

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