INTER-TEL®

Case Study

Draexlmaier Automotive of America North America, Romania and Germany

MAINTAINING STELLAR CUSTOMER SERVICE

In the competitive world of automobile production, Draexlmaier Automotive of America (DAA), must constantly assess and reassess their production processes to improve time-to-market, reduce inventory, and most importantly, ensure that customers and suppliers remain synchronized to maintain an efficient production schedule. DAA is the North American subsidiary of a global supplier of automobile components for manufacturers such as BMW®, Daimler Chrysler® and Audi®. Headquartered in Germany, the auto parts manufacturer has built a reputation for providing high-quality parts for high-quality automobiles. With some 25,000 employees worldwide, DAA takes painstaking care to ensure that their customers receive parts as expeditiously as possible. Any delay in production could cost a car manufacturer millions of dollars in lost revenues, so time—and access—is critical.

To address the needs of its customers, DAA has a number of plants around the globe to maintain the supply chain, among which is its North American headquarters in Duncan, South Carolina, along with sites in Detroit, Texas, Mexico, Romania and Germany. Communication between these locations is critical for DAA to keep tabs on inventory and orders, and provide top-tier customer service.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE– CONVERGING VOICE AND DATA NETWORKS WITHOUT COMPROMISING VOICE QUALITY, FUNCTIONALITY OR CUSTOMER SERVICE LEVELS

The cost of sustaining separate voice and data networks was escalating each month, with some monthly long-distance charges going into the tens of thousands of dollars. DAA needed to find a way to control costs, while not compromising the robust communications network it required. So the company made the decision to deploy Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) to better leverage its infrastructure and reduce operating expenses.

"When we first discussed the introduction of VoIP into our system, we made it clear that, above all, we would not settle for any reduction in voice quality or features," explains Bill Freund, information technology manager for DAA. "Our company is highly regarded for its customer service, and we couldn't tolerate any disruption caused by the deployment of VoIP."

FAST FACT...

Draexlmaier experienced a high return on investment quickly with Inter-Tel IP and wireless solutions.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE– FINDING A FLEXIBLE FOUNDATION AND APPLICATIONS THAT ENHANCE CUSTOMER SERVICE AND BUSINESS PROCESSES

Another consideration was the ability for DAA to add applications and features that would create better business practices, such as introducing wireless communications into select facilities, and installing voice menus in the native languages that the company was doing business in.

"We felt that if we were going to go down the path of implementing VoIP, it would make sense to identify and integrate new applications that we can leverage to increase our productivity and customer service," explains Freund.

THE INTER-TEL SOLUTION

The first step was to find a knowledgeable vendor that not only understood the nuances of both data and voice communications, but also was experienced in identifying features and applications that would improve business operations. After considering a number of vendors, DAA met with Inter-Tel, and its South Carolina authorized provider, American Communications.

The selected solutions called for deploying Inter-Tel advanced communications platforms at strategic sites throughout DAA's global network to handle call routing over the company's T1 infrastructure. Although geographically disperse, the Inter-Tel platforms are networked together to give the enterprise transparent features and functionality.

The second phase involved installing about 1,500 new endpoints, including Inter-Tel's IP phones and wireless headsets to drive applications to the DAA's workforce. Additionally, DAA integrated advanced call routing and customer relationship tools to further streamline the company's communications activities.

DAA also required a user interface menu, in multiple languages, that was easy to use from both internal and external perspective.

"One of the benefits of Voice over IP is the fact that it distributes the applications throughout the network, which results in more features for the end user," explains Joey Justice, president of American Communications. "As a result, Inter-Tel was able to create a user menu for DAA in every native language the company uses for business purposes. If a Romanian employee dials an American extension, he or she will hear the menu in Romanian. Conversely, an American dialing an extension in Mexico will receive the menu prompts in English. It's a very intelligent, user-friendly way for a global company to conduct business."

In addition, DAA deployed wireless endpoints running on the Inter-Tel VoIP platform. This mobility further enhances productivity by giving team members the ability to communicate with colleagues around the globe while filling orders on the floor, or finding spare parts in a warehouse half a world away.

WHY INTER-TEL

"The wireless voice solution, running on the data infrastructure, was another tangible benefit for deploying Voice over IP." Freund says. He adds, "DAA recouped its quarter-million-dollar VoIP investment within the first nine months of running voice over the data network. The savings in our toll and long-distance charges have been significant, and the fact that we experienced such a high ROI so quickly further validates our decision to deploy Voice over IP," he says. "Most importantly, the solution—combining applications, hardware and wireless—makes us a more responsive and efficient company, which in our business, is the foundation for success."

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