Large Financial Services Company Boosts Sales Productivity and Speeds Branch Openings While Saving Millions

Overview

Before companies with large sales forces can fully deploy CRM, they often must upgrade their networks and communications. This issue faced a large financial holding company that sells more than $4 billion in insurance, annuities, and other products each year. Its many thousands of independent agents work out of several hundred branch offices across the U.S. However, they weren't as productive as they could be, in great part due to an inefficient and outdated telecommunications infrastructure. Black Box® helped the company consolidate telecommunications at 300+ locations across the U.S. into a private, cloud-based unified communications system. The solution was delivered as a managed service, for which Black Box owned and operated the infrastructure. The program was paid for with immediate cost savings generated from the consolidation and modernization of the network. Since deployment, sales force productivity has soared, boosting new premiums by potentially millions of dollars annually. The company's IT and finance groups also have greater visibility into the cost and operation of their new IT infrastructure. And, with Black Box, they have just one point-of-contact. Their jobs are much simpler now, freeing them for more strategic work.

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGE

- Delayed branch openings due to slow, manual communications setup
- Outdated, high-cost phone systems with limited CRM integration
- Growing risk from end-of-life telecom infrastructure

SOLUTIONS

- Mobile-enabled unified comms via private cloud
- Centralized SIP trunking and call management applications
- Fully managed infrastructure with 30-day roll-out guarantee

RESULTS

- 50% reduction in long-distance costs
- $3M+ saved from capital and operational efficiencies
- 35% more sales appointments via CRM integration
- $1M/year saved via toll-free call cost management and SIP-trunk routing
- $900K/year saved by offsetting progressive dialer license fees with monthly agent license fees

BENEFITS

- Faster time to revenue with scalable future-ready UC platform
- Simplified IT operations and strategic focus
- Increased financial visibility through centralized expense management

Challenges

Before engaging Black Box, most of the company's offices had aging phone systems that were unable to be integrated with their CRM system. Carrier connectivity was via expensive local trunks. Infrastructure decisions were made based on what IT had the capability and capacity to support, not based on what supported the business strategically. Speed was an issue in opening new branches. Before engaging Black Box, a new branch could take months after a lease-signing just to get communications and connectivity set up. This consumed tens of thousands of dollars in capital expenses and demanded the attention of one or more senior employees. More importantly, it delayed opening the branch. Finally, the company wanted to cut overall costs. Its recurring operating expenses were growing because its aging TDM phone system infrastructure needed costly local trunks from the phone company to operate. The systems also required frequent servicing. In fact, much of its phone system infrastructure was nearing the end-of-life, so the status quo was a business risk.

Solutions

The company turned to Black Box to design and plan a solution, resulting in a specification that was put to bid. Black Box won the business despite tough competition from the incumbent and several other major providers. A key factor was that Black Box needed far fewer subcontractors to serve the company's 300+ U.S. locations, thanks to its extensive local presence. Only 10 locations required outside technicians while still meeting SLA requirements.

The solution was for Black Box to deploy, manage, and operate a mobile-enabled, private cloud-based Unified Communications system, offering standardized endpoints, centralized management, and improved cost efficiency. Compared to a public cloud, this approach offered IT more control and better policy alignment.

To eliminate capital costs, Black Box owned and managed the cloud as a service, using its ITIL-based approach. It also provided a single point of contact for all services and support. The private cloud, hosted at the company's two redundant data centers, connects branches via MPLS and includes SIP trunking from a top-tier independent carrier. Black Box guarantees 100% uptime during business hours and enables full branch connectivity within 30 days.

To ensure a smooth migration from an outdated TDM system, Black Box used a four-step deployment process and provided custom Day One training and 24/7 user support.

Results

Black Box's solution quickly paid for itself by significantly cutting recurring costs. It halved long-distance rates and reduced T1 and MPLS expenses, saving millions. Unified Communications mobility eliminated $400K in phone costs and reduced cabling needs by 50%. A toll-free and SIP-trunking app now saves $1M annually. Using license fees for dialer software avoids $900K more. CRM integration boosts agent productivity and revenue, lowering turnover. IT and finance now benefit from a single invoice and a TEM system that allocates costs, reduces billing errors by 20%, and simplifies audits, delivering major time and cost savings.

Why Black Box?

This financial services provider selected Black Box not just for the technology, but for the partnership. Black Box's ability to deliver a fully managed, end-to-end unified communications platform, backed by deep nationwide coverage, strong service levels, and a disciplined ITIL-based approach, enabled the company to streamline operations without disruption. Black Box stood out among multiple providers thanks to its proven experience, extensive in-house support capabilities, and strategic commitment to customer success. By transforming communications into a scalable, cloud-based service with built-in cost savings and enhanced visibility, Black Box helped the company modernize with confidence and unlock new business value.

Black Box® is a trusted IT solutions provider delivering cutting-edge technology products and world-class consulting services to businesses across the globe in every industry. The breadth of our global reach and depth of our expertise accelerate customer success by bringing people, ideas, and technology together to solve real-world business problems.