

Piedmont Regional Library System improves their telecommunications with TalkSwitch® and A&J Computers Inc.

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A&J Computers Inc.

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Piedmont Regional Library System at a glance

The challenge

Outfit the regional office and adjoining public library with easy-to-deploy, centrally manageable system with voicemail, auto attendants and remote extension capabilities.

The solution

1 TalkSwitch system
7 TalkSwitch 9143i phones &
2 TalkSwitch 850i cordless

Location: Winder, GA

Employees: 9 staff plus the library circulation desk

Established: 1953

Background

The Piedmont Regional Library System (PRLS) is a consortium of eleven member libraries in Banks, Barrow and Jackson County which share resources under the umbrella of a regional system. The Regional Office, which is located in the Winder Library, supports its member libraries through book selection, cataloging and processing, IT and PINES Support, Regional Courier Service, Regional Bookmobile Service, bookkeeping and administering state funds. The Regional Office serves its member libraries so that library staff at each library can spend most of their time directly serving its customers. The Winder Library is one of the member libraries and is a full service public library.

Challenge

Both the PRLS office and the Winder Library have distinct and separate functions. PRLS office provides support services to the public libraries of three counties and the Winder Library is a public library serving the locale community. Both entities used an aging, discontinued Legacy phone system with proprietary digital lines. Replacement parts were no longer readily available and the cost of maintenance was rapidly increasing. Outside the PRLS staff office, the Winder Library circulation staff constantly bounced between mobility in the library and being tied to the desk answering phones. George Tuttle, Computer Services Technician and Alan Harkness, Director, needed a system that would standardize call handling across the entire extension service. They wanted a system with rich features that could be affordably deployed in every office and be configured and managed remotely. They also wanted something that could be expanded and upgraded easily.

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Solution

After extensively researching new phone systems available, PRLS chose TalkSwitch. They quickly realized the system's vast feature options including easier administration and long-term maintainability which was not previously available with the old legacy system. After turning to TalkSwitch directly for a local vendor who managed installation processes, education and training of the system, PRLS teamed up with A&J Computers Inc., an IT technology service leader in NW Georgia for over 20 years. A&J's depth of knowledge of the system and willingness to provide support up front even before they were awarded the contract spoke volumes to PRLS. "A&J Computers displayed the most confidence with the system, having worked with it on a regular basis," comments George. "They were authoritative and knowledgeable about both the system and installation and were able to suggest features that I had not been previously aware of."

Auto Attendants and Voicemail

Both the PRLS office and the library required its own Auto Attendant personality. Voicemail was available for each staff member. He adds, "I love the voicemail to email feature."

Cordless Extensions

The Winder Library circulation staff could now continue to work throughout the library, shelving books and interacting with patrons while still being accessible and available for incoming phone calls.

Remote Configurability

With its previous system, a PRLS staff member was forced to come in to the office to change the voicemail message or call in an expensive phone technician to perform the task. The new TalkSwitch system can be configured, altered and managed from a remote location -- ideal during inclement weather conditions. "Although there is an ease of configuration, it helps to have formal training from an experienced representative," commented George. "Before, a technician was required in order to make changes to the phone tree. Now, I can handle this myself."

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Phone Freedom

With their old phone system, the offices were tied to proprietary telephones that were expensive and didn't work with anything else. Worse, because the system was discontinued, they were forced to shuffle working phones from office to office when other phones broke down. That was a situation they could not enter into again. TalkSwitch is designed to work with any corded or cordless analog telephone, so PRLS has a lot more flexibility in setting up and maintaining the system.

Upgradeability

TalkSwitch is designed to grow and expand with a customer, so adding on to the system is a snap. It also provides a smooth migration path to VOIP.

Results

By switching to TalkSwitch, PRLS was able to:

- Improve office efficiency by freeing the circulation staff by allowing them to service library patrons while moving about the library and still answer calls without being tied to the desk;
- Improve customer service, ensuring consistent call handling and information delivery across the network;
- Save money by doing installations and changes themselves, rather than relying on expensive technicians;
- Save time by handling configuration remotely, rather than traveling to the office for every change;
- Develop a smooth migration path to Voice Over IP (VOIP);
- Transfer calls between offices by dialing a 3-digit extension number;
- Offer a range of telephone features that were previously not available to their users.

"I believe the strength of A&J Computers is that they live up to their commitment. That is rare today in the technology field."

- George Tuttle, PRLS Computer Services Technician

About A&J Computers Inc.

A&J Computers Inc. was founded in 1989 to provide businesses, home users and home offices with a combination of IT services usually only found by having agreements with a number of different providers. By providing a single point of contact for all of an organization's IT needs, we help companies save time and money. Each of our senior staff has more than 20 years of experience each in IT-related fields and maintains certifications from numerous technology companies. Our clients are diverse and span Industries such as manufacturing, real estate, technology, financial services, legal, personal care, retail, non-profit organizations and recruiting. We build and manage the technology infrastructure necessary to advance client business strategies and vision.