

The City of Williamsburg, Virginia Increases Reliability, Decreases Capital Expenditure with Cloud-Based Phone System

The City of Williamsburg, Virginia and Carousel partner to upgrade the city's aging phone system to modern, cloud-based phones.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organization: City of Williamsburg, VA

Industry: Government

Number of Employees: ~200

Challenge: An aging phone system was lacking key functions and features to best serve the City.

Solution: A cloud-based RingCentral phone system offers more functions, better reliability, and cost savings.

OVERVIEW

Williamsburg is comprised of nearly 15,000 residents and the City has roughly 200 employees. Williamsburg is best known for its tourist and historical points of interest, like Virginia's first capitol building, the Governor's Palace, Bruton Parish Church (the oldest continually operating church in the United States), and The College of William & Mary.

CHALLENGE

Mark Barham, Director of Information Technology, City of Williamsburg was faced with an aging phone system—one that was nearly three decades old.

"The phone system worked, but we couldn't get reliable replacement parts when we needed them and the systems lacked modern features and functionality we needed to best serve the City," said Barham. After devoting budget to fund the upgrade, Barham went to typical phone vendors until one employee suggested a different route.

"I hadn't thought of exploring a cloud-based phone system and quite honestly, putting our phone system in the cloud scared me," said Barham. Entertaining the employee's request, Barham decided to explore a cloud-based phone system through Carousel and RingCentral, throwing that option into the mix with other RFPs.

SOLUTION

"I hadn't heard of RingCentral before this initial process, so I walked into it completely blind," said Barham. For the City of Williamsburg, anything technology-related—think 911 phone calls to fire department systems—falls on Barham's shoulders.

He said, "the most difficult part of this process was convincing myself that I could put a phone system in the cloud. At the end of the day, it's still telephones—it's a vital communication tool—and if it doesn't work for whatever reason, I must answer for that."

In working with the numerous RFPs, it was clear that RingCentral offered different features and functions that could benefit the City. And, the pricing from Carousel and RingCentral was such that he could reallocate some of the budgeted money to other projects. The savings from canceling old circuits and moving to the cloud, also meant they could use very little CapEx for the upgrade, with the rest being OpEx.

RESULTS

Barham notes that the biggest learning curve was that phone systems were managed from a web browser and not hardware, but that employees have embraced and enjoy the new, streamlined system.

Because of the upgrade, Barham could take all the City's disparate systems—the fax machines, meeting accounts, phone numbers, etc.—and put them into one system.

He said, "Initially, the city had all these different systems, now we have the RingCentral Office™ for voice and fax and RingCentral Glip™ and Meetings™ for collaboration, one platform that is extremely easy to use and offers new features we didn't have before—like instant messaging and single dial."



200 EMPLOYEES



LOCATION



GOVERNMENT