Vertical Wave IP Comes in First Place with Hodges Badge Company

Background
If you’ve ever won a ‘First Place’ ribbon in school, you’re probably familiar with the work of Hodges Badge Company. It is the country’s largest manufacturer of school awards, show ribbons, medals, trophies and rosettes. In business since 1920, it employs close to 150 people in two locations.

“We’re one company, one group,” said Jenn Hodges, customer service manager at Hodges. “Our communications system needed to unite our employees, allowing us to function as a single entity.”

Fortunately, Hodges is also one of the early adopters of the Vertical Communications® Wave IP unified communications platform, which the company has used to grow its communications capabilities along with its continued growth. Hodges recently upgraded the system to take advantage of even more advanced UC capabilities when it added more staff in its Missouri branch office.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- Customer: Hodges Badge Company
- Industry: Custom award and ribbon manufacturing
- Locations: Headquarters in Rhode Island, branch location in Missouri

CHALLENGES
- Establish seamless connectivity between company locations
- Increase productivity and customer satisfaction through expanded unified communications (UC) capabilities
- Reduce reliance on manual system administration
- Improve call recording and reporting capability

VERTICAL SOLUTION
- Wave IP
- WaveNet
- Wave ViewPoint
- Wave Call Recording
- Wave Call Reporter
- Wave Global Manager

RESULTS
- Successfully networked headquarters and branch locations, improving company communications and reducing costs
- Implemented advanced UC functionality and features, including voice mail and instant messaging, to enhance customer service and increase productivity
- Automated system administration to quickly implement employee moves, adds and changes
- Established detailed call reporting and recording for use in performance reviews
CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

The ability to add new employees to the system without technical disruption or a huge learning curve was a priority, as was the need to enhance communications, not just between the company’s headquarters in Rhode Island and the Missouri branch, but throughout different departments and areas of their respective buildings. Employees didn’t want to be tethered to their desks during calls, and wanted the ability to message each other in real time to get immediate answers to customer questions. In addition, when the receptionist put multiple calls on hold, the staff found that they often couldn’t tell which line was holding for which agent.

Solution

Since the Wave IP is a software-based solution, Hodges has been able to take advantage of new, advanced features at no additional cost under the original system’s license agreement.

“The Wave solution is so easy to use,” said Hodges. “That alone has boosted our productivity. Our staff is so dedicated to ViewPoint on their PCs that some of them have said they’ve forgotten how to use their desk phones.”

To help ensure quality customer service and review employee performance, the company now uses the Wave IP’s powerful Call Recording feature. With the addition of Wave Global Manager to the system, it can also quickly create customized marketing and other outgoing messages to inform callers about special promotions and company policies. For example, the company recently adjusted its closing time from 7 p.m. to 6 p.m. to accommodate a shift in order activity from in-store to online. From her home computer, Hodges was able to revise and activate the new message in just 10 minutes. Previously, the company would have had to plan the change a week in advance. “Now I can implement new business decisions and reflect them in our messaging almost immediately,” she said.

Results

Voice Systems estimates that both cost savings and productivity at Hodges Badge have doubled since it deployed the Wave IP and its comprehensive software upgrades over the last five years. The company recently introduced Bluetooth capability, allowing employees to roam around the office during calls. With the new headsets supported by the Wave IP, employees can leave their desks and head to the printer, consult with a colleague, or search for material without ever leaving the call. Call lengths have been reduced, orders are processed faster and customers are happier.

“Our effectiveness has increased considerably with the Wave platform,” concurs Jenn Hodges. “Our people are able to address more issues and answer questions without putting the customer on hold.”

For more information on products and solutions from Vertical Communications®, contact your Authorized Vertical Business Partner, call 1-877-VERTICAL, or visit www.vertical.com.

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