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# EAGLE TELE-SERVICES

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FULL-SERVICE CALL CENTER  
TURNS TO SWITCHVOX



## ■ Overview

Operating a fast-growing customer call center that can handle up to 10,000 inbound and outbound calls per day requires a robust telephony system. Eagle Tele-Services had outgrown their older Cisco phone system, which was stable, but simply too limited to handle their call volume. Fortunately, a better phone system was just a call away.

Eagle Tele-Services is a full-service call center providing the commercial trucking industry with continuous after-hour road service. Eagle's call center supports a number of independent tire dealers, as well as the American Commercial Tire Network, Michelin Americas Truck Tires, and Yokohama Commercial Tire throughout North America. Started more than 10 years ago, their call center located in Powhatan, Virginia, 30 miles west of Richmond, is the heart of operations.

### **Switchvox Phone System, Powered By Open Source Asterisk, Drives High-Volume Virginia Customer Call Center**

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So what does a heavy-volume call center do when their call capacity overwhelms the phone system from an industry heavyweight in the business telecommunications industry? They turn to Digium's Switchvox system with Unified Communications (UC). Switchvox is a more affordable and more flexible system that not only handles current activity levels for Eagle Tele-Services, but is also capable of expanding to meet future growth — without breaking the company's budget.

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## Cisco Costs Versus Open Source Viability

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According to Eagle IT manager Coleman Austin, they had been happy with the decade-old Cisco and initially looked to Cisco for a new upgraded system. “It was just going to be too expensive to buy a new Cisco and even if we opted to simply upgrade the existing system, it would have still been too small for our needs,” Austin says. “I was familiar with open source technology and had some knowledge of what Asterisk could do. When we saw that a Cisco phone system was going to cost a quarter of a million dollars, it was well outside our budget so we had to look for an alternative.

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Coleman Austin  
IT Manager, Eagle

”Asterisk is an open source telecommunications framework that lets programmers build communications applications like IP PBX systems, VoIP gateways, and conference servers. Sponsored by Digium, Asterisk is also the engine that drives their all-inclusive commercial Switchvox phone system.

“At first I was concerned about taking on an Asterisk system because I thought it was more suited to the technician or programmer and I was concerned it would have too steep a learning curve. That was when I learned about Switchvox.”

## Finding Switchvox

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Digium designed Switchvox as a comprehensive, user-friendly business communications system. Powered by Asterisk technology, Switchvox offers users the flexibility and affordability of open source but it does not require any technical knowledge of Asterisk at all. To show its true ease of use, a Digium VoIP specialist set up a demo for Eagle, and then they provided some training via webinars. Austin says the system was so simple to use, extensive training wasn’t necessary and they were able to jump right in and start using it.

Eagle Tele-Services originally purchased a Digium Switchvox SMB 355 with UC, designed for larger businesses that need high-performance and high redundancy, supporting up to 400 users. Realizing they needed even more power, they also purchased a Switchvox 470 with UC that supports up to 600 users. “We now use the 470 as our main appliance for the call center,” Austin explains. “We use the 355 primarily for redundancy, and we recently purchased an SMB 305 that I use for offsite testing; but by next summer, we may be ready to pair another SMB 470. That is how fast we are growing.”

## Feature-rich and Easy

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The Switchvox system gives Eagle a whole menu of features and functionality including advanced IVR capabilities, detailed reporting, mobility, and voicemail/email integration so they can email straight from the system. It also provides an easy switchboard interface, and call recording for training purposes. Austin says their favorite feature is the built-in call queues, which are imperative to accurately distributing calls within a large and busy call center environment.

“The way the call center is set up, we have representatives who work only with for instance, Michelin clients, or only with Yokohama customers, but some of the representatives are skilled at working with multiple clients. The way the queues are set up, if all the Michelin reps are on the phone, that call may be routed automatically to a Yokohama queue, but only to those reps that are knowledgeable about Michelin as well. It is a complex system with many rules but we are able to easily and quickly program those queues to do whatever we need.”

*“With Digium you can make suggestions and they listen to their clients. .. any suggestions we make we will probably eventually see in an upgrade, which is also another benefit — upgrades are free.”*

Coleman Austin  
IT Manager, Eagle

## Compatible and Interactive

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Setting up and installing the Switchvox was simple. Already wired for VoIP, they had to perform a few workarounds in order to integrate the existing Cisco infrastructure. They replaced some of the PoE switches and modified the customizable configuration to fit Eagle's managerial structure. Eagle is also using a mixture of telephone sets including some Digium IP phones. The system also integrates easily with the phones they already had which included some Bria Counterpath call phones.

"Another of the things I really enjoyed about working with Digium is that you can make suggestions and they listen to their clients. We are told that any suggestions we make we will probably eventually see in an upgrade, which is also another benefit — upgrades are free," Austin says. "A big part of the purchase was the expense it would have cost us to buy the hardware needed to upgrade the Cisco system. With Digium, upgrades are free."

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