

Case Study

Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS)



Client: State of Ohio

The State of Ohio includes 88 counties and an estimated population of 11.5 million. Ohio has 611 individual school districts and 14 four-year public universities with 24 branch campuses. The state government consists of 21 main statewide agencies, boards, and commissions that oversee day-to-day public service.

Challenge	CBTS Solutions	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antiquated phone system which is costly to maintain. • Little use of modern communications and collaboration technology. • Strong desire to "get out of the phone business." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single, cloud-based communications solution. • Latest collaboration technology. • Managed by CBTS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saved \$6.8 million in the first 24 months of use. • Recognized nationally as the best communications solution implemented at a state level in 2016.

Business Challenge

The vast majority of the 55,000 state employees were using antiquated and sometimes disparate phone systems. These legacy systems were very costly to maintain and were approaching or far beyond the end of their technical life. Some agencies were leveraging eBay for parts to extend the life of their on-premises PBXs, and had very few telephony support staff familiar with the equipment. The standard infrastructure technology was cutting edge 30 years ago. There was no way to track and manage the old phone systems from a central location. The system provided only the minimum of functionality, dial tone, and voice mail.

Additionally, several larger agencies were utilizing state resources and third parties to build, operate, and maintain an isolated telephone system serving only their organization. One of the main goals was to get the public organizations out of the business of managing their communications solutions and concentrating on serving the people in the state.

The state also aimed at providing a dedicated and consolidated communications solution for over 550,000 government employees serving Ohioans in K-12, higher education, local, and municipal government capacities.

CBTS Solution

Once the stakeholders from state government, higher education, and local government formed joint requirements, they researched several options for a service provider. The state then sponsored a bid to create a unified communications solution and awarded the contract to CBTS. They called their solution the Next-Generation Telephony Service (NGTS).

NGTS is a cloud-based voice utility service that reduces telecom costs across all State of Ohio agencies and schools. NGTS brings the State of Ohio into the mainstream of IP telephony, and gives each user complete control of their telecommunications platform.

CBTS Solution (con't)

CBTS was awarded a five-year contract, with multiple 2-year, no-bid renewals, to implement and support all government funded entities in Ohio with IP telephony service.

The NGTS platform carries a full suite of communications and collaboration tools, which includes:

- Design, call center
- Web-based desktop video, point-to-point, and multi-point video capabilities
- Audio and video conferencing

The NGTS service is available to all Ohio funded agencies, higher educational institutions, local governments, and K-12 schools.

As part of the State of Ohio's IT optimization initiative to drive efficiencies and reduce costs within the state organizations, their CBTS Hosted VoIP Solution has established the foundation and set a new standard for statewide voice communications. NGTS reduces capital and usage costs, has no upgrade, capacity, or technology refresh expenses, and offers enhanced capabilities, compared to older PBX-type phone systems.

The solution is offered as a collaboration initiative between the public and private sectors. It is sponsored by the Department of Administrative Services and Board of Regents. Best-of-breed engineers from OARnet, Office of Information Technology, Department of Transportation, Bureau of Workers' Compensation, CBTS, Cisco, Acme, and VMware designed and support the system. They are also focused on carving out the roadmap that enables the services to scale and meet the changing needs of all Ohio public organizations that consume NGTS.

CBTS provided dedicated and certified project managers, operational personnel, and leadership to make sure the technology solution is delivered on time and within budget, and managed beyond the service level expectations of the customers:

- NGTS utilizes the existing network infrastructure to transmit voice signals, which allows users to maintain a single network for voice, video, and data communications.
- Leveraging Cisco IP phones and Acme packet session border controllers, CBTS installed and is managing the system proactively.
- The consolidated system offers free on-net calling. All calls within the NGTS system are offered to users at no charge, while out-of-state calls are reduced to a lower cost per minute.

Results

According to the Ohio Office of Budget and Management, the state saved \$6.8 million in the first 24 months of utilizing this solution. More than 40,000 end points are under management by CBTS as of June 2017. Installation and maintenance will continue with the goal of having CBTS deploy and manage over 50,000 IP phones. The solution encompasses two separate, redundant data centers for highly available services and backup capabilities.

With this solution, the State of Ohio implemented an end-to-end unified communications platform that allows the government to:

- Eliminate large capital expenses and reduce operational costs across the Ohio enterprise.
- Enhance system performance and capabilities in the short and long term.
- Eliminate technology and service obsolescence by always having the latest, up-to-date technology
- Remove system management burden for the public organizations.
- Allow even the smallest agencies in the state to utilize the same infrastructure without sacrificing cost or performance.
- Reduce travel expenses and increases training opportunities by using video conferencing.

National Recognition

In September 2016, the State of Ohio CIO and team were recognized by the National Association of State CIOs (NASCIO) with the first place award for "Information Communications Technology (ICT) Innovations" in recognition for combining best-in-class technology with significant tax payer savings. This is a national award given to the best state-level ICT implementation across the country.