

KOPPERS CUTS CORD ON TRADITIONAL TELECOM

A Measured Approach to Transformation

To chart the course for the global rollout to nearly 40 locations, Koppers decided to start at the most visible location: its Pittsburgh Headquarters.

The end of life of a 15-year old Siemens phone system was the catalyst. The IT team also wanted a corporate standard for communications.

The firm's European operations had been successfully using Lync for dial tone, but the corporate IT team took time to make their choice.

After evaluating ShoreTel and Skype for Business, the firm decided upon Microsoft's solution. The rollout at HQ has compelled them to move forward.

"Now, we have HQ on Skype for Business voice," said VP of IT Tushar Lovalekar. "Our other 1200 users are on Office 365 and we are actively promoting the use of IM and screen sharing, in anticipation of moving sites to Skype for Business Voice."

INNOVATION LEADS GLOBAL MANUFACTURER TO SKYPE



Reinventing has kept Koppers at the head of its field for 105+ years, and has made it a global leader in railroad and utility products, coal tar distillation and specialty chemical production. Reinventing the company's communications platform with Skype for Business is off to a successful start and setting the course for a global rollout.

Getting Comfortable with the Lift and Shift

Frank Pascoe has spent his career building and maintaining highly available business phone systems. "Initially, I wasn't 100% comfortable moving from a traditional system to a server-based system. Now that we're on it, I'm a lot more comfortable. Knowing the internals of Skype have made me more comfortable with the reliability concerns that I'd originally had." Like most telecom professionals, Frank did his diligence. "My biggest thing was to understand how it worked. Going through the set up process and understand what's under the hood, and how the high availability works, helped much more than just reading the marketing slicks."

VP of IT Tushar Lovalekar filled in strategically. "We started this discussion two years back, where we had evaluated ShoreTel and Skype. We were initially convinced that ShoreTel was the way to go, because at that time we weren't convinced with the maturity of Skype for Business. But as we started researching the Microsoft cloud, and as we started migrating to Office 365, and as IT started using Skype, it was evident that with a feature set so powerful, Skype was our choice."

ROI Realized in Two Years

“We had a hard dollar ROI,” said Lovalekar “We also saw improved efficiency, and reduced risk of running a legacy phone system. **Payback was realized in two years**, whereas three years is our typical payback breakpoint. It was really compelling to go ahead with Skype.”



Areas of tangible ROI included:

1. Teleconferencing expenses have gone down by \$3000/mo.
2. Savings moving from PRI to SIP trunking.
3. Long Distance calling.
4. Decrease in travel (estimated conservatively, could save \$20,000, but “I know for sure we’ve saved much more. Because of Skype, we are using more videoconferencing than ever before, even though we spent \$100,000+ on some systems.”

“The Skype videoconferencing experience is seamless. It’s been fantastic and simple to start a video conference on Skype. Video usage has grown organically.”
Tushar Lovalekar, VP of IT

One area dampening ROI is that Koppers hasn’t been able to cut into the current cellular roaming costs. “We were hoping the Skype mobile client would be widely used when people are traveling, and use Wi-Fi as opposed to roaming cellular networks,” said Lovalekar, “but we haven’t seen utilization pick up on Skype mobile on iOS.”

“The biggest efficiency is not having all the moves/adds/changes,” said Pascoe. “We used to open a ticket with a Siemens technician to come onsite and physically move a phone. Now it’s literally picking up your PC and Polycom phone and walking to a new office and plug in. It’s also efficient to onboard a new employee with a phone number, since it’s integrated with the rest of our network/directory setup process.”

Business Outcomes

Koppers has seen Skype effectively improve business operations in several ways.

The VP of a business unit in Europe now has responsibility for employees in the US. His team is doing regular video conferences to break down the barriers of distance and time zones.

During a major crisis with one of the company’s systems, teams from across the globe got together on Skype to resolve the issue. Said Lovalekar: “After it all got fixed, the general comment was **‘How did we do this before, without Skype?’**” In two back to back all-day conference calls, Pascoe said “We used nearly all the features of Skype, with people jumping in and out, IM’ing commands for people to execute during the meeting, sharing screens, and bouncing ideas back and forth from Pittsburgh, home offices, and Germany.”

"Right around the same time we released Skype," said Lovalekar, "The company implemented a work from home policy. Working from home is the same as working from my office. I don't even have to think twice about working from home, all I need is headset and laptop."


"Our work from home transition wouldn't have been as smooth had it not been for Skype."

Tushar Lovalekar, VP of IT

Koppers' customer service team is using delegates and some advanced call routing through Skype. "They were toughest to configure," said Lovalekar. "They wanted simultaneous ring, want a delay before the call rolls to coverage, and wanted missed calls dropped in the original called party's voicemail box."

Training Gets Rollout on Track

Koppers selected pilot users from various departments who they knew would be sponsors: "It's worked," said Lovalekar. **"When we deployed for champions, we very quickly got requests from others around them to get Skype."**



Shannon Rodgers, IT Customer Service Liaison, played a pivotal role in training. "Our invitation to training included links to online videos. We provided a booklet at the hands-on training. I've done one-on-ones with tips/tricks, and continue to train. When I sent out an email recently, we got feedback on voicemail, so I quickly

gave them another link that answered their questions. There's a great amount of information available."

Adoption Takes Off at HQ and Beyond

The team had call quality concerns in past experiences with VoIP systems, but Pascoe notes that "Most of our call quality problems are at plants without optimal bandwidth, because they're adopting faster than we're ramping up."

"Having plug and play devices is fantastic," said Lovalekar. "I can have a call on my laptop, take it into a conference room and plug into a USB speakerphone, and we're and off and running. It's very very intuitive, so that we don't have to spend much time teaching people how to do this."

"I noticed early adoption at our plants where Skype wasn't even advertised yet. As we started using it at HQ, adoption for IM and conference calls, usage skyrocketed at the branches, on its own, without encouragement."

Frank Pascoe, Network & Skype Administrator

The Importance of a Qualified Partner

Office 365 Workloads

used at Koppers:

- Exchange Online
- SharePoint Online
- OneDrive for Business
- Project Online
- Dynamics 365
- Power BI
- Intune
- Office 365 Video

"The system outperformed expected capabilities, and Enabling is a good partner to have," said Lovalekar. "Given the complexity of the implementation, we were very happy with the end result and didn't have disruption during or after the implementation."

"Working with Enabling's engineer, he did a great job," said Pascoe. "He took the whole project and ran with it, kept me in the loop so I was shadowing him and getting up to speed at the same time. It was good to get more comfortable with the product and how it works. Even though he was remote, he was using Skype."



Lessons Learned

"Every day, we're getting requests for a desk phone," said Rogers, "and **Enabling has gotten us get out of the ordering business** by letting

users go directly to Enabling. The turnaround has been quick and the experience and people pleasurable. On a technical front, when users have a desk phone, a speaker phone, and a Bluetooth headset, we've experienced issues with having a Bluetooth headset pairing to both a PC and mobile at the same time."

"If we could do this all over again," said Lovalekar, "we would have planned on (and now are) handing out \$60 headsets to people and get them used to it without handsets earlier, so that when we transition, we don't buy as many deskphones."

"We now send out headsets to plant managers and administrative managers, who are going to be on a lot of Skype meetings," said Rodgers. "This helped them adapt, and simply plug in and meet. They've been open to change and grateful for the system" as a result.

"For companies that are on Office 365, Skype for Business is the next logical step because it works very well and provides all the benefits that you can get with your Office 365 investments."

Tushar Lovalekar, VP of IT

To point your UC&C or Office 365 project on the path to success like Koppers, contact info@enablingtechcorp.com

