



Customer Spotlight

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Ramón Venero, PHR
SHRM Director of Administrative Services

inContact™ Plays critical communication role in business continuity plan

Challenge:

Implementing a disaster recovery plan for a Professional Association

Organization:

Headquartered in the Washington D.C. area, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) was founded in 1948 and has grown to serve more than 175,000 individual members in more than 100 countries and more than 500 affiliated chapters within the US. As the world's largest association devoted to human resource management, the organization has grown to nearly 300 employees and manages three small call centers that provide regular outbound and inbound communication services to its dispersed membership.

Problem:

SHRM's office buildings are located near a railroad line where hazardous materials pass by, and near a Federal court house where high profile case activity takes place. The organization was concerned that their area could, on any given day, be suddenly secured, preventing access to their office building.

A business consultant was hired to help the organization define a business continuity plan. The plan called for various relationships to be in place so that the SHRM employees could quickly relocate to an alternate facility.

What the plan did not account for was continuous inbound phone service. Typically, in any disaster recovery plan, physical locations can be pre-defined, but phone numbers can not be assigned until the disaster occurs and workers actually show up at the backup facility. This is a common scenario, unless an organization is willing to pay a fortune to retain a block of phone numbers.

Without inbound service, SHRM could not

continue servicing the nearly 1,000 ACD calls it receives on average per day, significantly impacting the organization's ability to provide service to members, as well as handle requests for information and inquiries regarding its conferences, seminars and other products.

Solution:

Working with the Association Resource Group (ARG), a Washington-area telecom consulting group that specializes in associations, SHRM identified 40 critical phone numbers. Those numbers were setup as "Customer Redirect" numbers on the Verizon network, with the redirect pointing to the UCN IP network and its inContact application that resides within the UCN network. "Literally, at the push of a button," explained Bill Power, ARG President, "those important SHRM numbers can be redirected to ring anywhere – at another office site, at someone's home - using the automatic call distribution (ACD) features in the inContact application." SHRM now had a complete business continuity solution.

Redirecting SHRM's toll free numbers was especially easy, said Power, since those numbers were already UCN network numbers and could easily be pointed at the inContact application. "Local numbers are the real challenge for any disaster recovery plan" said Power. "However, more and more Local Exchange Carriers are implementing a Verizon-like redirect service. The question is, where do you point the number so that the customer has maximum flexibility in terms of supporting its displaced employees – who could be at home, in an alternate office, or working out of a hotel room on a cell phone."

Most businesses aren't aware this kind of service is available," said Power. "It can take several weeks to implement and test, so it must be setup in advance with the LEC." The first step is getting the identified phone

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numbers to ring into inContact. This step is setup in advance. The second step is programming inContact to redirect the calls anywhere the customer needs them to go. This can be done in minutes. ARG recommends testing a business continuity system at least once every six months.

Business Benefits

“The UCN solution provides SHRM a robust voice platform to respond efficiently during business

interruptions by creating a virtual PBX that allows us to maintain essentially all the same functionality of our premises switch but with the added benefit of being able to route calls to any phone on the public network,” said SHRM’s Director of Administrative Services, Ramón Venero, PHR. “The resulting benefit is that SHRM is able to maintain high quality service to our customers even when our facilities are unavailable.”

ARG – UCN Sales Agent

Association Resource Group, a telecom consulting group, has been supporting associations and other businesses in the Washington D.C. area since its inception in 1991. ARG is a full-service provider, helping companies and organizations analyze what they need, how to implement it, and offering ongoing support to organizations that do not have telecom experts on staff. Telecommunication services include: local, long distance, conference calling, web conferencing, data connectivity and bandwidth management.