



The City of Minneapolis' search for a comprehensive call accounting and wireless management platform that would generate the unique reports needed to keep their large telecom operation running efficiently.



Background

The City of Minneapolis is one of the top 50 large modern cities in the US and is ranked also as top technology city. The city's Telecom Operations typically handles thousands of calls each week. 911 and 311 operations manage hundreds of calls per day to the various departments best suited for responding to citizen inquiries.

Business Information Services (BIS) oversees the city's telecom operations. BIS' mission includes; 1) Implementing information technology solutions that meet business needs, and 2) Providing cost-effective, efficient and reliable information services. To that end, BIS set out to upgrade its aging Telecommunications and Networking infrastructure. Included in that overhaul was the need to update its Telecom Expense Management efforts.

Starting in 1989, the City had purchased Siemens PBX and voicemail systems, adding five more for the police precincts from 1995 to 2000. In 2000 the City issued an RFP for upgrading the City Hall system and those at several other locations. The contract for additional Siemens' systems was awarded to Black Box in March of 2005 and installed during 2007. Comview's Total Talk Management platform was added in 2008 when the City looked to upgrade its Call Accounting services and add Wireless Device Management.

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The solution was truly a team effort, in addition to working with the BIS team members, Comview also worked in conjunction with Siemens, the supplier of the PBX equipment to the City and Black Box, Comview's channel partner responsible for the sale of these services.

Challenges

BIS identified several key improvements necessary for its Telecom Expense Management.

- Update expense management system to be congruent with upgrades in Platform. Existing vendor upgrade costs, customizations, training, configuration changes and maintenance were viewed as extremely expensive.
- Improve the chargeback systems which were a difficult and time consuming process
- Control escalating costs.
- Upgrade to include wireless reporting capabilities.
- Upgrade to include several custom reports that had not been included in the present implementation.

BIS had an incumbent vendor for call accounting management, but now they would also need a solution for wireless. While conducting due diligence with the current vendor, BIS had come to the conclusion their performance was below expectations. In addition the current vendor had quoted expensive custom changes

and upgrades for most everything required – literally tens of thousands of dollars. The system was cumbersome to use and reports really didn't work the way BIS needed them to work. There were also problems with lost data.

For wireless expense management, BIS was using an access database, as well as manual processes for billing and inventory management. They were also relying on the service provider to measure efficiencies and where savings might be found. Above all else, a system for billing with charge backs was truly the biggest requirement.

Comview Solution

Comview proposed its Total Talk Management for integrated Call Accounting & Wireless Management with the needed customized capabilities included. Comview also assured BIS that implementation, including all customization, would be completed within 90 days.

The specifics of the solution included:

- Update Call Accounting Management to reflect upgrades in platform
- Add Wireless Management
- Integrate into one comprehensive platform.
- Ability to inventory and manage all Wireless Devices
- Custom Reports for 311 transfers to manage efficiency of service
- Custom reports for bill-backs to various city departments
- Investigate areas for potential savings and increased efficiencies.
- Hosted solution – no need for internal IS resources.

Prior to the actual implementation, BIS had done some work up front to learn and document their organizational structure. Comview assigned a project manager who took BIS through everything. Conducting weekly status meetings Comview's project manager focused only on the issues that were key to getting the implementation done quickly and effectively. The hosted application also made things easy, besides a few buffer boxes that were installed, there were no issues with legacy integration, servers, firewalls, no software or

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hardware needed, especially important given that BIS outsources its IT to a third party. Comview also implemented all of the custom reporting features

BIS required making sure each was exactly what was needed. Finally, multiple training sessions were held before the new application went live.

We asked Gina and Chris to sum up their views on the Comview solution.

Here's what they had to say, "They have this customer for life philosophy, which is really good. Soon after we met, we realized it was like a breath of fresh air. When it came to the solution, Comview presented some options that were hard to ignore. During implementation we really liked their approach to getting things done as well as their ability to create custom reports (as part of the contract). The chargeback billings report was exactly what we needed. Comview's experience with the providers was another real strong point. We had very favorable rates, but we knew we weren't catching some of the things that would save us money. And to top it all off, Comview offered unlimited free training – our other vendor was charging us up to \$5,000 per training event."

Customer Results

One of the more significant results included the ability to predict monthly budgets with great accuracy and help with the annual budgeting process. BIS was able to run special reporting on 311 calls and transfers to internal departments. That data is now used to assure proper resources are in place and to improve first call resolution rates.

For wireless, the City gets great rates, so it was more about finding inefficiencies. The carrier rep had reported 90-95% efficiency. At those levels, BIS really didn't see a need to dig much deeper. Comview ran the numbers and found actual efficiency was running closer to 75% and made recommendations for closing that gap.

Bottom-line: Despite the City having very low Government rates, fairly good existing pool utilization, and a high percentage of data devices, Comview found savings of 13.3% or \$6,000 per month.

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About Comview

C O M  I E W

Comview's flagship integrated telecom management offering combines Telecom Invoice Processing, Wireless and IT Asset Management, Procurement and Call Accounting in a single integrated platform. Comview's managed service/BPO approach and "customer for life" philosophy provide customers with the highest level of service and support and sustainable ROI. Comview's services are used by major organizations throughout the U.S. and abroad. Learn more at www.ComviewCorp.com

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