

Challenge

In the competitive convention and entertainment industry, the DECC needed to:

- Differentiate their facilities through exemplary customer service
- Find a communication solution that offered flexibility, scalability, cost-efficiencies, enhanced productivity, and rich mobility options

Value Created

Avaya IP Office helps the DECC to:

- Improve staff responsiveness through integrated mobility features both on-site and off-site
- Increase productivity via time-saving features and ease of management
- Improve customer service by routing calls directly to specific ticket offices
- Improve customer experience by balancing loads during times of peak inbound and outbound calling
- Generate additional revenue by providing customers with communications services, quickly and economically
- Save over 50% (\$18,000+ per year) in phone line costs



Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC)



Avaya IP Office brings comprehensive value to the DECC through enhanced productivity, responsive customer service, integrated mobility options, revenue enhancement, and cost savings

Introduction

The Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC) consists of two hockey arenas, a performing arts center and auditorium, two convention centers, an eight-sheet curling rink, an indoor football field, a ten-plex movie theater, and administrative offices. The complex covers approximately one million square feet, situated on the far western shore of Lake Superior. The DECC also includes a 700-foot ore boat that now serves as a floating maritime museum, and lakeside docks for tour boats.

Avaya IP Office has provided the DECC with a comprehensive, highly reliable, and cost-effective solution for increasing staff productivity, customer satisfaction, and revenue generation. It has also provided fully integrated options for mobility both within and outside the buildings.

Challenge

Managing a large number of both full-time and part-time employees that are distributed over an area roughly the size of 17 adjoining football fields can be a monumental task. This rings particularly true in a customer-service driven sports and entertainment business like the DECC, which can be serving tens of thousands of people at any given point in time, be it on-site or over the telephone. According to Jeff Stark, Technology and Hockey Operations Director, the DECC's communications challenges are both varied and complex. *"Our facility was developed in stages since the first structure was built over 45 years ago,"* Stark commented. *"From an IT perspective, this means we have different infrastructures and a wide range of applications that need to be accommodated."*

The bottleneck created by huge peak-period call volume was a growing

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concern. All calls to the DECC facilities went through a central receptionist area, including those for the sports and entertainment events, the movie theaters, and the floating museum.

The DECC also rents individual phone lines or banks of phones for trade show booths, concert artists and staff, sports teams, arena vendors, press, and VIP booths. The organization saw an opportunity to generate revenue and reduce costs by delivering lines far more quickly and efficiently, and with a wider range of options than previous providers could offer.

Managers at the DECC needed a way to be highly mobile yet accessible at

the same time. *“Meeting our customers’ needs involves a fast pace and frequently a high level of urgency,”* Stark said. *“A reliable mobility solution was deemed essential to enable us to move around the several buildings that comprise the Center or even outside, yet to stay in touch at all times.”*

Solution

Stark and his team researched numerous approaches, including both hosted and in-house systems. After consulting with an Avaya channel partner, they decided to install Avaya IP Office.

The initial installation of Avaya IP Office was done for buildings that were in existence prior to the completion of the new hockey arena. *“This gave us an opportunity to become acclimated to the system before we moved it into the new arena,”* Stark explained. *“For the second phase, we added another 60 to 70 extensions when the new building was constructed.”*

He added, *“We are particularly pleased with the consultation and services provided by our Avaya channel partner. They’ve done a great job for us, and we have a productive ongoing partnership that is valuable in keeping us abreast of new technologies and how they can be leveraged to our advantage.”*

Stark has found the Avaya IP Office solution to be flexible, reliable, robust, and feature-rich—supplying everything that is needed for the complex campus environment.

Value Created

Integrated mobility options and other advanced functionality help to improve productivity and responsiveness of employees wherever they are

Excellence in customer service starts at the top. Licenses for the IP Office Mobile Worker application have been utilized for several managers at the DECC. This feature enables one-number access, whereby business calls ring simultaneously on the office phone and any other designated phone such as cell, remote office, or home phones. This helps the DECC managers avoid missing calls and also supplies them with system features such as transfer, conference, forward, hold, and remote voicemail retrieval.

“Managers at the DECC are extremely mobile,” Stark explained. *“In order for all of the activities to run smoothly, it’s important that we be accessible to customers and colleagues. The Mobile Worker capabilities of IP Office have made a tremendous difference in the way we can stay connected while still having the freedom to move around the facility as much as we need to. We can take calls from any location, anywhere in the world, just as if we are in the office.”*

The DECC uses the IP Office Receptionist solution, which is a PC-based application that provides a range of call controls through the user’s computer. It also allows the user to see the status of other IP Office users and direct calls to other users on a simple drag-and-drop basis. *“This is something that never could have been imagined with our previous system,”* Stark commented. *“Users are telling me that these features have made a very positive change in the way they do their jobs.”*

Other valuable features for employees using Avaya IP Deskphones include the campus-wide directory, inbound caller ID, and individual DIDs for employees. These have enabled employees to do their jobs more quickly and efficiently, thus improving productivity. Different departments have also used specific functions such as phone management applications and contact management functions to streamline their workflow.

Stark is currently deploying videoconferencing capabilities and expanded mobility features that bring desktop features to mobile devices. He feels these will be valuable for the DECC staff and as available options for their convention customers.

Flexibility, scalability, and ease of management help to enhance customer service and revenue generation

Depending on the venue and the type of event being hosted, customer communications requirements can vary widely. Of course, customer expectations can vary just as widely. Meeting or exceeding a customer's expectations is the first order of business at the DECC. With their IP Office solution, DECC staff can easily and quickly supply a large number of phone lines with a wide range of features for staff, long-term tenants, and customers with temporary needs. This capability improves customer service and enhances the revenue that comes from renting/leasing lines.

Through IP Office, the DECC is able to provide telephone service to their movie theaters, which are leased; to an excursion dock for tour boats; and for the coaching staff of the University of Minnesota-Duluth Men's

and Women's Hockey Teams. They are also able to rent individual phone lines or banks of phones for trade show booths, visiting concert artists and staff, sports teams, arena vendors, press, and VIP booths. The basic service and many additional options that can be offered are a significant source of revenue for the DECC.

"The management of the system is great," Stark said. "Now, I have the ability to get a phone line anywhere in the building in the time it takes me to walk to the location and get the line patched in. We can deliver a full range of options to our customers, and we can do it quickly."

Calls for the entertainment venues are now routed directly to the appropriate office through a self-service interactive voice response platform. With the System Status Application (SSA) included in IP Office, Stark and his team were able to prioritize phone line allocation to favor ticket sale operations, so that whenever a line reached full capacity, its load would be distributed across other available lines. *"By balancing the load in this way, we can now handle situations where we have a crush of calls all at once for popular events," Stark said. "SSA is very valuable to us because it enables us to sell tickets on a true first-come, first-serve basis to avoid having angry customers."*

According to Stark, *"We have tremendous flexibility with IP Office. It allows us to use analog lines where we don't have the capability to run Cat 5 or Cat 6 cabling. At the same time, it provides a very broad range of capabilities that can be delivered through a highly reliable system for IP telephony."* This reflects Avaya's

commitment to providing customers with platforms that can accommodate digital, analog, wireless, or SIP-ready modalities instead of IP-only systems.

Extraordinary value

Significant cost savings have also been achieved. Stark commented, *"Our phone bill was running about \$3,000 a month with the previous phone system, because we had so many analog lines coming into the building. Now our bill is less than half of that—about \$1,200 for our channel bank with T1 lines. Our revenue for sub-leased and temporary line rentals covers that reduced cost."*

Stark concluded, *"Avaya IP Office has essentially been—and will continue to be—a 'one-stop' solution for the many telecommunication needs that we have here at the DECC. We are*

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extremely pleased at the way we have been able to scale this single product to meet all of our needs in a very cost-efficient way. There's no question that Avaya IP Office is delivering extraordinary value throughout our facility. It has enabled us to make positive changes in the way we work, to manage our communications system with much greater ease, to save money and enhance our revenue, and to satisfy our customers' most complex and critical needs. It also gives us future readiness for advanced technologies that will continue to enhance our work processes and customer offerings."

Learn More

For more information, contact your Avaya Account Manager or a member of the Avaya Connect channel partner program, or access other collaterals by clicking on Resource Library at www.avaya.com.

All statements were made by Jeff Stark, Technology and Hockey Operations Director.

Systems and Applications

Avaya IP Office Preferred Edition	Avaya 5410 Digital Deskphones
Avaya IP Office Mobile Worker	Avaya 5610SW IP Deskphones
Avaya IP Office Power User	Avaya 5621SW IP Deskphones
Avaya IP Office SoftConsole	Avaya 9608 IP Deskphones
Avaya 3641 Wireless IP Handsets	Avaya 9641 IP Deskphones

ABOUT DULUTH ENTERTAINMENT CONVENTION CENTER (DECC)

The Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC) is a multipurpose facility that has been home to the University of Minnesota-Duluth Bulldog Hockey Team since 1966. It now hosts both men's and women's teams from the University, and the Duluth Curling Club. In addition to its extensive sports facilities, the center has an auditorium for concerts, Broadway plays, operas, dance recitals, high school graduations, and other activities. There is also a movie theater complex and convention/trade show facilities that include 2 ballrooms, 30 meeting rooms, and over 100,000 square feet of space for exhibits and/or activities. Outdoor facilities include a tour boat dock and a floating museum, the S.S. William A. Irvin ore boat. For more information, please visit www.decc.org.

About Avaya

Avaya is a global provider of business collaboration and communications solutions, providing unified communications, contact centers, networking and related services to companies of all sizes around the world. For more information please visit www.avaya.com.

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