



CCC Technologies
"The Convergence Company."



Success Story

Media Company Moves PBX to the Cloud with Help with Help of Reinvent Partner CCC Technologies

The modern media business is a round-the-clock affair with 24/7 news cycles, print deadlines and live on-air programming. It's a challenge at the best of times, but even more so with an aging and broken-down phone system.

The fact that Bliss Communications managed it successfully for decades is a testament to the ingenuity of the resourceful company and its IT team. But, when its patchwork system began to regularly interfere with the quality of the work product, they knew it was time to finally upgrade.

Headquartered in Janesville, Wisconsin, Bliss Communications is a family-owned company with newspapers, radio stations and websites in Wisconsin and Illinois. The organization also has a commercial printing and packaging facility that serves regional newspapers. The facility produces in excess of 1 million copies a week and produces some 350 publications weekly in multiple languages.

Between its web, radio, newspaper and commercial printing businesses, the company manages several 24/7 operations – all of which squeeze every ounce of value and time out of technology solutions.

"When it comes to technology, we invest in things that are solid and last a long time," said Chad Lette, technical services and facilities director at Bliss Communications. "If a system's lifespan is 10 years, we'll try to get 30 years out of it."

Indeed, 30 years is what Bliss Communications got out of its legacy phone system before turning to the experts at [CCC Technologies](#), a [Reinvent Telecom](#) partner, for guidance with implementing a new solution.



Bliss Communications, Inc., owns and operates newspapers, radio stations and web sites in Wisconsin and Illinois. Headquartered in Janesville, Wisconsin, it has been owned by the Bliss family for more than 100 years.

Challenge

Bliss Communications' on-premises PBX was installed in 1987. Employees used what Lette calls a "Mad Men phone" -- a reference to the hit TV show about New York ad execs in the 1960s and '70s. "It wasn't a rotary phone, but it was a basic 12-button handset that didn't do anything," explained Lette. "It didn't even have a light on it that indicated you had a voicemail."

When word got out that the company was considering an upgrade, Lette said employees were looking forward to finally having Caller ID. Lette notes the system was no longer supported by the OEM. "It was difficult and expensive to maintain, frequently failed, and no longer provided the functionality we needed," he said.

In particular, the system's voicemail server was a problem. It would not operate for more than 24 to 36 hours before it needed a reset. This impacted the company's call-in lines where readers and listeners could leave messages voicing their opinions about news stories and local issues.

The legacy system also complicated the company's radio station operations, forcing personnel to reroute calls to a control console or studio board before they could go on-air. Also, during contests when, for example, the 10th caller would receive a prize, phones would be flooded, and radio station personnel would be forced to manually pick up and hang up the phone and count the number of calls to determine who won. It was a tedious process that required what Lette called a "magical dance" of managing both analog and digital technologies.

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Could UCaaS Be Right for Your Organization?

Moving communications and collaboration applications to the cloud allows companies to see significant, measurable benefits across a range of areas. It's no surprise then that more than half of all companies have shifted to a cloud-based model. In addition, within companies that have deployed UCaaS, 16% report that all their employees are on the platform and 30% say at least half of all employees get their UC apps in the cloud.

Objectives

Bliss Communications' current philosophy about new technology – whether a content management system in the newsroom or a telephone system – is to get out of the hardware business. To the extent possible, the company tries to send everything to the cloud. Nevertheless, Lette and his team explored all options, including upgrading the company's legacy on-premised system, purchasing a new premises-based system or transitioning to a hosted solution.

"We looked at on-premises systems, but the numbers didn't make sense when you compare them to hosted solutions, which give you so much more," said Lette. "Given the value and features of cloud-based telephone systems today, it would be crazy not to go with them in my view, so we started exploring hosted options."

For Bliss Communications personnel in production, sales and editorial departments, enhanced flexibility and mobility were top of mind, he said.

On the wish list:

- A softphone application that can be installed on users' computers, tablets and cell phones, so they can be used as business phones
- Mobility options allowing employees to use company systems, collaboration tools and other resources remotely
- Speech-to-text with voice mail and call recording
- Robust reporting and analytics features to track sales and customer service metrics

Solution

Lette worked with CCC Account Executive Dick Philipp to evaluate eight different hosted solutions – many from well-known brands – and created a huge spreadsheet that covered the different technology, features and costs. After all that legwork and due diligence, Lette realized the perfect solution was close to home.

"Nearly all the features were the same [among the hosted services], but pricing was all over the place," he said. "In the end, we went with CCC's ConvergeConnect® hosted VoIP solution with its UC package because the tech was there, the features were there, the price was on point and we already had a good working relationship with the company.

Bliss Communications had been working with CCC for about two years to jury-rig the 30-year-old system to meet some of the more modern needs like forwarding calls to mobile phones. "We thought their implementation would be terrific – and they didn't disappoint," Lette said.

In a matter of weeks, CCC deployed its ConvergeConnect® solution, which is powered by Reinvent Telecom's communications platform as a service (CPaaS). Reinvent's solutions are all built on the proven platform from Metaswitch, a global leader in communications network software technology.

CCC and Reinvent engineers quickly converted 350 lines and enabled 150 users with a range of applications, including Hosted PBX, UC as a Service (UCaaS), Contact Center and Call Recording.

Results

“Overall, the new system has made a tremendous difference company-wide,” said Lette.

The company was particularly impressed with CCC and Reinvent for custom programming and routing designed to make life easier for producers and DJs at the company’s radio stations. For call-in shows or contests, calls would need to come in on the phone lines, be screened or counted by a producer and then go on-air from the studio board. “Once we hooked those new phone lines up and the routing was correct, the sound quality improved dramatically, which was fantastic,” Lette said.

Bliss Communications’ production team also is pleased with the new system, particularly its integration with mobile phones, which enables them to make and take calls wherever they are –on the plant floor, or enroute to a distribution drop-off. “The transportation manager, production managers and shift leaders have to be connected all the time,” Lette said. “This just makes it so much easier.”

For the sales team, the big win is the ability for their business line to ring to their cell phone, so they don’t have to give out their personal numbers and when they end their day, they can rest assured that the voice mail will get the calls. “They don’t have to worry about losing a client or losing that sale because voice mail is down, which is what happened with the old system,” Lette said.

For the Customer Service department, the addition of Advanced Call Distribution with a live dashboard of call metrics like call volumes, hold times, etc., has helped Bliss Communications adjust staffing levels and improve customer service. “If we’re staffing that call center with four people and we see that there are always two people idle, we can slim the workforce down,” Lette explained.

Bliss Communications has benefited so much from CCC’s UCaaS solution that the company is now considering integrating their customer relationship management (CRM) software with the hosted system.

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About CCC Technologies

CCC Technologies was founded in 1984 by a group of telecommunications professionals. Today, we are one of the few business IT solutions providers in the Midwest that specialize in both voice and data managed services. We support everything from a 28,000 user National Account to a five (5) person office. Small enough to care – large enough to get the job done! With experienced and trusted sales Account Executives and a World-class Operations Team we help and assist our customers with a single site or multiple locations with CCC resources that deliver deep engineering expertise and provide specialization skills with designing, deploying, and supporting IT environments on premise, in the cloud, or combination of both (hybrid).

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