

Challenge

“Putting people first” is a serious commitment at Astoria Federal Savings and Loan Association, the largest thrift depository headquartered in New York. With an Avaya enterprise telecommunications solution and an Avaya contact center solution already in place, the management team wanted to add secure, effective mobility options so that its tech support and contact center supervisory teams could have maximum flexibility in providing fast, effective responses to employees’ and customers’ needs.

Solution

For the mobility and home office solution, Astoria Federal has deployed Avaya 3631 and 3641 Wi-Fi handsets, tied into the Wi-Fi network throughout the main office campus; an extension-to-cellular solution utilized for travel outside the main campus; and a VPNremote phone solution for executives who work at home. Avaya Communication Manager 4.0 with an AUDIX voicemail solution runs on an S8720 Server for the entire headquarters campus. Call Center Elite, Interactive Response, and the IP Agent application are deployed in the contact center. Avaya PARTNER® Advanced Communications System is used at the branches, with Distributed Office being piloted.

Value Created

- Astoria Federal has achieved an estimated 25% increase in IT team availability for quicker troubleshooting and enhanced reliability of all banking services.
- IT teams can troubleshoot problems while maintaining live phone contact with the affected employee.
- IP Wireless handsets deliver clear reception and voice quality everywhere in the building. Calls to IT team members outside of the headquarters building can be received via Extension-to-Cellular, further increasing responsiveness and eliminating service delays.
- Contact center supervisors will be able to multi-task efficiently while roaming throughout the center, to support agents and resolve customer issues quickly.
- Avaya Wi-Fi technology provides mobility while maintaining high security standards.
- VPNremote phones provide secure, full-featured office functionality for executives working from home.
- The Avaya Contact Center solution brings the latest technology for routing calls quickly to appropriate agents, empowering efficient handling of approximately 3,000 calls per day.
- Ease of management has been achieved for the enterprise, mobility, and branch applications.

Mobility, Contact Center, and Enterprise Solutions Work Hand-in-hand to Ensure Top-notch Customer Service and Internal Communications at Astoria Federal Savings and Loan

LAKE SUCCESS, New York – Today’s banking customers expect to have 24/7 access to their account information and their funds, whether they are standing in the lobby of their neighborhood bank or paying their hotel bill while on vacation across the country. Being left too long on hold while waiting to speak to an agent, or a “server unavailable” message while attempting to pay a bill online, can lose bank customers. All of these transactions depend on reliable communications.

Astoria Federal Savings and Loan Association, serving the residents of Long Island since 1888, recognizes the value of unified communications to their customers and to their own success. Astoria Federal’s 4,000 employees serve their customers from their headquarters and 86 branches in the Long Island area, and a mortgage broker network spanning 22 states and the District of Columbia.

Avaya Mobility Solutions Solve Workflow Challenges

Although transparent to most banking customers, Astoria Federal’s IT department plays a critical role for all the banking services. A telecommunications problem can prevent customers from reaching Astoria’s 800 number, or block an ATM from accessing a customer’s account, even when the cause of the problem is external to Astoria’s systems. When such problems occur, the IT department is contacted to resolve it. *“The IT department supports the company as a whole, and all of our customers within the tri-state New York-New Jersey-Connecticut area who use our automated systems or our telephone*

banking system,” said Joe McGlyn, IT Manager. *“The imperative is to resolve the problem quickly, to minimize impact to the customer.”*

Without an effective mobility solution for IT staff, problem resolution can be delayed, with significant effect on employees’ workflow and/or customer service functions. In the words of McGlyn, *“When people call to report a problem, support technicians might have to put the phone down and run back to the equipment room to check the T1 slot or server*

or some other potential problem area. If they have to transfer or ‘park’ the call while they do this, the callers don’t know what is going on while they are on hold, and sometimes calls can be lost. This can cause serious delays in delivering proper service.”

Astoria Federal’s IT team sought out a mobile solution that would enable them to take calls at their desks and bring the calls with them as they went to troubleshoot. They also wanted to be able to receive emergency calls wherever they happened to be. Moreover, the solution had to meet the banking industry’s standards for secure telecommunications.

Working directly with their Avaya technical specialist, Astoria Federal selected the Avaya 3631 and 3641 IP Wireless Telephones. Along with bringing the benefits of mobility, this solution was economical and did not require adding another system to the telecommunications infrastructure. Infrastructure changes or upgrades were not required, because Astoria Federal already had a wireless network in place at their headquarters. This existing network met all security standards, and was used for a combination of laptop and PDA access.

“We already had a Wi-Fi data network in place in our building. The wireless phones we added use all of the same encryption points that the APs use. As far as setup goes, there were no major changes other than setting up a security access group to have voice go over the access points. This gives us the level of security that we need for banking transactions.”

Now, IT staff can take calls at their desk, walk to the equipment room, and troubleshoot the equipment, all while keeping the caller online. They can respond

to calls wherever they are and troubleshoot the problems wherever they may be.

McGlyn commented, *“Our headquarters campus is a three-story building with access points on every floor. With the Avaya IP wireless handsets there is reception everywhere. I can go through the stairwells and even travel the elevators with excellent reception and voice quality. It was amazing; when I went up the elevator I still had my call, which was a nice feature. This solves all of the issues that arise when you try to use cell phones for the same purpose inside a large building.”*

McGlyn added, *“Our initial deployment of the Wi-Fi phones was so successful that we have expanded their usage to other technical groups, and we are also equipping supervisors in the contact center with them. People who use the phone generally have one reaction – ‘Don’t take this away from me!’ People love them because they are intuitive and extremely reliable, with excellent reception throughout the entire campus. The overall mobility that one achieves really improves our availability and responsiveness to people’s needs. One of the most popular features is the speaker phone, which is valuable for hands-free work.”*

Extension to Cellular and the Home Office Solution Enable Uninterrupted Workflow Outside of the Main Campus

Another important Avaya mobility solution, Extension-to-Cellular (EC500), benefits Astoria Federal’s tech staff by enabling them to be reachable at their office phone number when

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they are away from their desks or outside of the campus. EC500, in effect, extends their office phone number from their office to their cell phone. When someone dials tech support, the call rings simultaneously on the tech's cell phone, complete with caller ID. This Avaya solution helps Astoria Federal's tech staff respond more quickly to trouble calls, **minimizing lost productivity.**

McGlyn has also installed VPNremote phones for a number of executives so that they can continue working without interruption if illness or any other circumstances require them to be at home. VPNremote allows executives to plug in a physical Avaya IP phone at home and use the corporate phone network as though they are sitting at a headquarters site. Separate home-based VPN hardware was required.

"With the VPN phone bridged on the desk number, our executives can have their phones ring in both locations, and if a line goes unanswered an administrative assistant can pick it up," McGlyn explained. "So, if for some reason the weather is bad or other circumstances arise, they can work from home. They can go right into the main system and get their data, they can get their voicemail, and it's all seamless because the solution provides a single point of contact for business needs."

Contact Center and Communication Manager Technologies Help the Bank Deliver on its Mission, "Putting People First"

The benefits of Avaya Intelligent Communications also extend to Astoria

Federal's contact center, which receives about 30,000 calls each day. About 10 percent of those calls are routed to live agents when callers have special needs that cannot be met by the voice-response system.

Astoria Federal is in the process of equipping its contact center managers with the Avaya Wi-Fi phones, which will help increase the productivity and call handling success of the agents. The Wi-Fi solution will enable managers to roam the center, improving their access to new agents in need of coaching, or to experienced agents dealing with a challenging customer. Overall, they will be able to multitask more efficiently.

The Avaya Contact Center, built upon proven and innovative automatic call distribution technology, offers a robust suite of call routing solutions. Call Center software enables Astoria Federal's agents to answer customer inquiries and concerns promptly and accurately, maintaining the company's reputation for personal, neighborly service. A feature of special value to Astoria Federal is flexible call routing, which closely matches agent skills with caller needs. This can help to reduce costs while increasing efficiency and first call resolution.

For enterprise communication at the headquarters site, Astoria Federal utilizes Avaya Communication Manager. Astoria Federal management and employees are particularly pleased with the Meeting Exchange capability. This is a multimedia teleconferencing solution with easy scheduling, meeting administration, and other useful features that contribute to better connectivity within the organization. With lower audio and Web conferencing communication expenses, it has delivered a rapid return-on-investment.

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*- Joe McGlyn, IT Manager,
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Astoria chose Avaya Global Services for the maintenance, implementation, integration and project management of their entire Avaya solution. This included the recommendation that they repurpose an existing S8700 Server to an ESS environment for redundancy and disaster recovery.

For its 86 branches throughout greater Long Island, McGlyn is piloting Avaya Distributed Office. Distributed Office is designed specifically with branch offices' need for simplicity, reliability, and streamlined management in mind. He commented, *"It's a fantastic product, very easy to administer. I think I can use the word bullet-proof because it hasn't gone down — it just keeps on running without problems."*

Superior Ease of Management Increases IT Productivity

Astoria Federal needs to maintain the privacy and security of customers' financial data, while complying with federal banking

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regulations. As a geographically diverse business, Astoria wants to ensure open, reliable communications across all of their offices and branches, but wants to do so in a cost-effective, efficient way. Avaya's

Unified Communications and mobility solutions, combining IP Wireless Phones, Extension to Cellular, VPNremote home-office phones, multimedia, contact center, and enterprise communications, proved the right investment product for Astoria Federal, and one that increases efficiencies.

In the words of IT Manager McGlyn, “Avaya has always made a very strong, robust product that works well in large corporate environments. The systems are easy to administer, and the interfaces work very well. The new platforms are wonderful where they have the graphical user interfaces (GUIs). When you need to make administrative changes in the Avaya system, you have a single interface you can use to touch all of the different systems. Avaya's ease of management is absolutely superior. This enhances the productivity of our IT staff.”

Learn More

For more information on how Avaya Intelligent Communications can take your enterprise from where it is to where it needs to be, contact your Avaya Client Executive or a member of the Avaya Authorized BusinessPartner program, or visit “Do Your Research” at www.avaya.com.

APPLICATIONS AND SYSTEMS

- Avaya Communication Manager
- Avaya 8720 Server
- Avaya Call Center Elite
- Interactive Response
- IP Agent
- Avaya 3600 Series IP Wireless Telephones
- VPNremote for 4600 Series IP Telephones
- Extension-to-Cellular (EC500)
- Avaya Meeting Exchange (web and audio conferencing)
- INTUITY™ AUDIX® Multimedia Messaging Server
- Avaya PARTNER® Advanced Communications System (branches) with Distributed Office being piloted

SERVICES

- Avaya 24x7 Maintenance
- Avaya Professional Services for implementation and integration

All statements in this Case Study were made by Joe McGlyn, IT Director, Astoria Federal Savings and Loan Association.

ABOUT ASTORIA FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION

Established in 1888, Astoria Federal, with deposits in New York totaling \$13.1 billion, is the largest thrift depository headquartered in New York. Astoria embraces its philosophy of “Putting people first” by providing the customers and local communities it serves with quality financial products and services through 86 convenient banking office locations and multiple delivery channels, including its enhanced Web site. Astoria Federal originates mortgage loans through its banking offices and loan production offices in New York, an extensive broker network covering twenty-two states, primarily the East Coast and the District of Columbia, and through correspondent relationships covering twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia. To learn more about Astoria Federal, go to www.astoriafederal.com.

ABOUT AVAYA

Avaya is a global leader in enterprise communications systems. The company provides unified communications, contact centers, and related services directly and through its channel partners to leading businesses and organizations around the world. Enterprises of all sizes depend on Avaya for state-of-the-art communications that improve efficiency, collaboration, customer service and competitiveness.

For more information please visit www.avaya.com.