



Hydro Ottawa Keeps Customers Energized With Avaya OneCloud™ CCaaS



Like every other organization, Hydro Ottawa needed to move fast to address the accelerating developments surrounding COVID-19. The energy and utilities company is the third largest in the province of Ontario, delivering essential electricity and related services to 340,000 customers. In a sector known for slow-moving transformation, Hydro Ottawa shines with seamless and intuitive communications, smart routing, and an easy-to-use mobile application. For executive leadership, it was critical that the company could continue operating as a digital business that creates customer-first outcomes, even (and especially) when things aren't business as usual.

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the company was immediately confronted with the possibility of disruption to their contact center operations while outsourced partners were forced to send their employees home. In less than a week, Avaya deployed a fully cloud based Contact Center-as-a Service solution, enabling employees, including contact center agents, to remotely work from home while effectively managing contact center operations and meeting customer needs. Avaya OneCloud CCaaS, a public cloud solution, allowed Hydro Ottawa to make this seamless transition with no interruption of service, ensuring the safety of their employees and enabling customers to continue to engage with the company they depend on.

“We had dozens of contact center employees who were adjusting to working from home. We were dealing with a huge influx in call volume, with many customers reaching out about bill extensions and payment options. There would have been upset callers, long hold times, and a certain decline in customer experience. The investment we made in Avaya has paid off.”

—Mark Fernandes, Hydro Ottawa CIO.



Hydro Ottawa had already been working with Avaya on its digital transformation journey including planning for potential disruption and the proactive nature of the partnership positively positioned the company when the outbreak suddenly hit. Roughly half the organization immediately ceased in-office operations and transitioned to a virtual work model, including employees at the company's contact center. Implementing OneCloud CCaaS helped Hydro Ottawa accelerate their transformation and enabled their employees to flexibly and securely work from home, while managers maintained visibility from a distance. Avaya also supported the company in implementing an intelligent self-service system to help keep live agents available for more complex or urgent issues. All done in the span of one week, the seamless transition allowed customers to continue engaging with the company the way they wanted and needed to with no disruption to service levels or employee productivity. “The move was so seamless that our customers didn't even know. We didn't blink, it was that good,” said Hydro Ottawa CIO, Mark Fernandes.

“If we hadn't had Avaya, we'd be wrecked. There's just no other way to say it,” Fernandez adds.

The company's greatest challenge, like every other organization, was the uncertainty of not knowing what would come next: what call volumes would be, how this would be managed, what customer concerns would look like, etc. There were also considerations that had to be made as an organization that operates in a highly regulated industry. “With Avaya, we maintained full visibility and continued to get the business intelligence we needed to make improvements and the best decisions for our customers,” said Fernandes.

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It was just as important that Hydro Ottawa’s employees felt taken care of during the crisis. “It was extremely important that we accounted for our employees’ health and wellbeing while they worked from home, many who were doing so for the first time,” Fernandes explained. “Many of these people are parents or have spouses who were also working from home. With the pressure to meet customer expectations and handle a high volume of difficult calls, the last thing they needed was lagging contact center capabilities. Avaya was instrumental in this.”

The expeditious and flawless experience in implementing OneCloud CCaaS in a time of crisis and the genuine care Avaya took in prioritizing the needs of its customers impressed Fernandes, as heartfully shared in a letter to Jim Chirico, CEO at Avaya: “In my career of dealing with many vendors, I haven’t seen any respond in the way Avaya has. They are a true partner. It’s one thing to say, ‘I’ll get this set up in a week,’ but there’s so much to be said for actually doing it. We had a tremendous customer experience with Avaya that made our relationship that much stronger.”

Avaya was able to help Hydro Ottawa seamlessly pivot during a time of unprecedented uncertainty, continue building confidence and trust among its customers and greater community, and fast-track business transformation to position itself for future resiliency. “As a CIO, I have been burned many times by companies that overpromise and underdeliver. Avaya is the real deal.”

About Hydro Ottawa

Hydro Ottawa Holding Inc. is 100 percent owned by the City of Ottawa. It is a private company, registered under the Ontario Business Corporations Act, and overseen by an independent Board of Directors consisting of the President and Chief Executive Officer and 10 members appointed by City Council. The core businesses of the Corporation are electricity distribution, renewable energy generation, and energy and utility services. Hydro Ottawa owns and operates three primary subsidiary companies. The essence of Hydro Ottawa’s strategy is to put the customer at the centre of everything we do. Reorienting our business around the customer was the primary goal of our 2012-2016 Strategic Direction, and customer centrality continues to drive our business strategy.

About Avaya

Businesses are built on the experiences they provide and every day millions of those experiences are built by Avaya (NYSE:AVYA). For over one hundred years, we’ve enabled organizations around the globe to win—by creating intelligent communications experiences for customers and employees. Avaya builds open, converged and innovative solutions to enhance and simplify communications and collaboration—in the cloud, on premise, or a hybrid of both. To grow your business, we’re committed to innovation, partnership, and a relentless focus on what’s next. We’re the technology company you trust to help you deliver Experiences that Matter. Visit us at www.avaya.com.