

Case Study

Flexible SIP Solution Helps Power Equipment Direct Ride Wave of Record Sales

In the summer of 2011, during the wake of Hurricane Irene, Power Equipment Direct, an online retailer, experienced a dramatic increase in the number of calls from consumers looking to order power equipment to deal with the Hurricane and its expected aftermath.

As a result of the increased call volume, Power Equipment Direct's sales lines were flooded with calls as demand for their products had exceeded the 150 call path capacity they were currently allotted. If Power Equipment Direct didn't find a way to increase call capacity immediately, this huge opportunity to meet the sales demand would quickly pass them by.



Power Equipment Direct was started in 2003 by Jon Hoch when after a frustrating experience shopping all over town for a specific lawn mower, Hoch decided there had to be an easier way to purchase equipment. He turned to the Internet as the answer and started selling pressure washers by creating the site, www.pressurewashersdirect.com. It did not take long before the site was making enough income that Hoch decided to create a few more sites all geared around power equipment. With the proper marketing and personal drive, the sites became such a success Hoch found himself hiring full time staff to manage and process the orders. Power Equipment Direct had become a success.

Power Equipment Direct now owns a number of various websites which focus on specific power equipment including chain saws, pressure washers, lawn mowers and appropriately – generators – a hot item anytime there is talk of natural disasters. Customers are able to purchase their equipment online and have the items shipped directly from the manufacturer's factory. By cutting out extra overhead and middleman costs, consumers experience lower prices than those found at retail locations.

With the business growing, Power Equipment Direct decided it was time to look into an updated and modern phone system suitable for their growing business. Turning to [Converged Technology Professionals](#), a highly reputable technology Gold Certified ShoreTel provider, Hoch comments, "We liked Converged because of their solid reputation and desire to take advantage of new technology to help businesses like ours operate with greater efficiency and ease."

As a recently awarded top support organization worldwide representing ShoreTel, Inc., a Unified Communications Provider, Converged suggested moving away from regular analog lines and incorporating SIP (Session Initiation Protocol) as a lower cost and more flexible internet based solution for sending and receiving calls. By utilizing the internet to connect to their existing ShoreTel platform, they would experience a greater degree of functionality such as adding Local DID's,

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extensions and additional trunks to accommodate workplace changes and growth. In addition, on average, SIP trunking solutions can save a company 30 to 70% in operational telephony costs, something Hock was obviously interested in.

Finding a SIP Service Provider who could connect to the existing ShoreTel platform was easy. Converged turned to ShoreTel Innovation Network Certified Alliance Partner, EtherSpeak, Inc. to implement their SureTrunk solution which connects natively to the ShoreTel system, meaning a seamless integration and no additional costly hardware. Converged, saw this as a natural fit, “For a company like Power Equipment Direct who rely on their phones primarily for incoming sales, having a solution which provides quick and easy set up and allows for flexibility, EtherSpeak’s SureTrunk solution fits the bill” states Joe Rittenhouse, President of Business Development.

Armed with 40 trunks already, Power Equipment Direct was capable of processing a significant amount of calls at any one given time. However, with the anticipated Hurricane Irene expected to storm the East coast within days, Power Equipment Direct began to see an increase in call volume from consumers anxiously preparing for the aftermath by purchasing the equipment needed to deal with any destruction, or power outages.



Without a moment to lose, they once again turned to Converged to provide a way to meet the growing surge in calls as the 500+ mile wide Hurricane started making its way towards the East Coast. With little time to spare, they needed to see what could be done – quickly. The agility of EtherSpeak’s SIP trunking solution, SureTrunk, and ShoreTel’s scalability combined with Converged’s award winning support would soon be put to the test as they would need to expand their current call path capacity to accommodate the approaching wave of expected orders in a very short time frame.

Had the former analog system still been in place, the answer would have been to order additional dedicated phone lines and phone numbers – a process that could have taken weeks and thereby forfeiting a great sales opportunity. However, with their new EtherSpeak phone service combined with ShoreTel, their system could be quickly reconfigured to allow for the addition of more SIP Trunks and resources, thus expanding the call capacity significantly in the time frame they needed.

Converged worked with SIP service provider EtherSpeak to make the proper configurations by adding a ShoreTel switch to work with the newly added licensed trunks– all within 1 hour. Neil Darling, CEO of EtherSpeak, comments, “We were able to quickly configure the trunks to allow for a temporary increase in call paths which would allow Power Equipment Direct to meet the demand of incoming calls.” Darling adds, “We understood the unique situation due to Hurricane Irene and wanted to help Power Equipment Direct so they could in turn help their customers. We were very happy to work with Converged to help out in this time of need.”

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Using the ShoreTel system, all of Power Equipment Direct's employees were required to log in as a Sales Group member/role – making every employee an on duty call agent. With all staff members taking on the role of call agents, Power Equipment Direct was able to complete record sales within just a few days – creating a new company record. Jon Hock comments, "We are very grateful for the understanding attitudes of both Converged and EtherSpeak when it came to recognizing the time sensitivity and urgency of the situation. Had it not been for their extreme responsiveness we would have forfeited many of these sales which was a record for us. There is no way a regular POTS service provider could have done what together ShoreTel, Converged and EtherSpeak have done."

About Power Equipment Direct

Power Equipment Direct (www.powerequipmentdirect.com), is a rapidly growing e-commerce retailer headquartered in Bolingbrook, IL. The company is ranked # 250 on the Internet Retailer Top 500 list and is one of the fastest growing companies in the US with appearances on the INC 5000 listing four years in a row. Their power equipment themed specialty superstores allow customers to quickly find and buy the perfect power equipment. The stores feature a wide selection of most major brands in product segments such as electric generators, snow blowers, lawnmowers, air compressors and pressure washers.

About Converged Technology Professionals

Converged Technology Professionals is a nationally-recognized, award-winning UC and mobility solutions provider for ShoreTel, based in the Midwest and serving a wide range of organizations from medium-sized businesses to multi-site large enterprises for their mobility, voice, and data needs. Converged Technology Professional's best-in-class customer service combined with ShoreTel's UC and mobility solutions assist companies within a multitude of vital industries including healthcare, financial services, manufacturing and the public sector meet their constantly-evolving technology needs. The company has a customer base spread over six continents and is one of the fastest growing VARs in the United States with last year's annual sales growth of over 1000%. Converged Technology Professionals is headquartered in Crystal Lake, IL with offices in Chicago, as well as Waukesha and Madison, WI. For more information, visit www.ct-pros.com.

About EtherSpeak, Inc.

EtherSpeak, Inc. is a member of the ShoreTel Innovation Network as a Certified SIP Provider. They are the market leader in providing native connectivity with the ShoreTel platform. Headquartered in Culpeper, VA, they also provide related services such as Disaster Recovery services, MPLS, Managed Connectivity and Internet Faxing with or without a fax machine. To learn more visit www.ietherspeak.com.