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Panasonic

Canadian Diabetes Association Chooses KX-NS1000; Expands Call Centre Capabilities and Reduces Dropped Call Rates



The Client

The Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) is the leader in helping people live healthy lives and in finding a cure for diabetes. Their key programs include prevention and education plans for those who are at risk of Type II diabetes, as well as provincial and federal advocacy, services and self-management for those living with the disease.

As the trusted source for clinical practice guidelines, CDA contributes to diabetes education for Canadian medical professionals. It is the only organization that provides children's camps for Type I diabetes, and assists children in learning how to manage their diet, administer their own insulin and maintain a pump. Fueled by dedicated staff and a community-based network of volunteers, CDA is nationally recognized for its proactive approach to preventing, managing, and curing diabetes.



The Challenge

With multiple offices across Canada, CDA relies heavily on their telecommunications system. Between internal calls from staff who work from the office or remotely and a busy inbound call centre, managing their high call volume efficiently is critical to their success.

Two years ago, their network consisted of multiple antiquated telephone technologies that weren't interconnected. Without proper connectivity, the cost of transferring external calls from the central toll-free location to another office was prohibitive. In some cases, callers would have to hang up and call another remote number. It also meant that long-distance fees applied to internal callers wanting to reach a colleague at a different location.

The caller experience for staff, constituents and potential donors was disjointed, inconsistent, and very costly.

“The potential for increased efficiency and standardization was obvious”, said Nigel Carpenter, former VP, and Chief Information Officer for Canadian Diabetes and former Senior Director of Information Services and Logics for The Arthritis Society. “We needed to streamline and standardize how we communicate internally and with outside callers. We also wanted to roll out a completely private network across the country which previously didn't exist.”

To significantly reduce long-distance and improve their call centre capabilities CDA needed inter-office connectivity with high availability and fault tolerance. They needed a robust solution that was fully supported, easy to manage, and that could scale as their organization evolved.





The Solution

CDA sought a partnership with a vendor who would provide enterprise-level solutions, prove their system, and help them mitigate the risks associated with launching any new technology. They considered major national vendors, and explored standardized and hosted technologies before choosing Panasonic.

“After our initial discussions, we knew Panasonic had the resources we needed to ensure the stability and performance that we were looking for, and without them being cost prohibitive” said Carpenter.

CDA chose Panasonic’s KX-NS1000 system with One-Look Network feature because it allowed them to take advantage of their data network to connect all their offices across Canada. They also chose to house the network at a co-location facility. With a mirrored KX-NS1000 on hot standby at another location, the rest of the network would stay up and run in the unique event that the central system ever went down. In the event of an outage, the standby system would kick in and recover in a couple of minutes.

CDA's Requirements Included

- Centralized administration to have full control of the platform
- Potential for reduced long distance for inter-company calling
- Voice mail to email functionality
- Ability to use soft phones
- Site to site four-digit dialing

With the design, plan, resources, and contingencies in place, Panasonic implemented the KX-NS1000 at CDA’s head office, which houses the largest number of phones in the organization. During the roll-out, Panasonic’s Japanese product engineers came on site to support their Canadian counterparts and CDA’s technology department to fine tune the configuration and fault tolerance levels for One-Look.

Over the next two years, CDA rolled out the KX-NS1000 across its offices, working side by side with Panasonic to gain the highest performance and correct any unforeseen issues along the way.

The Results

Over the last two years, CDA's dropped calls from their Information line decreased to 3% from 5.4%, while their dropped calls from their Donations line went down to 1% from 1.7%.

They've also gleaned other significant gains from their new technology.

“Cost savings are a phenomenal win for us” said Carpenter. “As a national charity, we have to be incredibly conscious and diligent with donor funds, so operational efficiency is always on the forefront”.

When the finance department needed to relocate to Toronto, it caused a lot of angst within the organization. As a core group, the finance department would also be first to be connected to the national and One-Look networks. When the department was relaunched in its new location, the staff saw that they could still reach each other with the same four-digit extensions, without compromising any call quality. That's when they knew the investment had been worth it.

With a more flexible network, CDA is better able to support staff, and launch unique campaigns with more agility than before. What was once an inefficient and fragmented infrastructure is now a streamlined and flexible network – one that helps callers navigate the entire organization and get the help they need within a highly responsive and delightful experience. And with the KX-NS1000's separate phone switch on standby, a perceived outage that could effectively take out an office for an entire day or more now takes CDA moments to recover.

The impact on the organization explained Carpenter, will be a lasting one.

“Our productivity is up and long-distance services connected to the technology have actually made the entire roll out of the KX-NS1000 cost neutral”.



MOVING FORWARD

Today, all major CDA offices across Canada are connected to the KX-NS1000. CDA continues to administer their network and as new features and upgrades are released, Panasonic assists and supports them in getting the most benefit from their platform.

“Thanks to Panasonic, we have realized the efficiencies that weren’t possible with our former infrastructure”, said Carpenter.

“Part of why this worked is that Panasonic as an organization is very focused on its reputation. They have a tremendous amount of pride, and this pride, along with their professionalism is exhibited in every person you’re exposed to at the organization”.

CDA is now planning their next KX-NS1000 integration into other offices. Part of this roll-out includes softphones for staff, allowing them to have a virtual phone extension within the national phone system. Other enhancements include finalizing the roll-out of office phone cloning for staff already on the One-Look network, allowing them to receive office calls on their Smartphones.

With improved internal and mobile communications and service levels, CDA staff, and volunteers serve their constituents better than ever. And they leverage Panasonic’s technology to continue to change and save lives.

