



Microsoft Lync Communications Case Study

Clark Pacific is a leading design-build precast concrete manufacturer in the United States with 350 Lync users at five locations.

After the recession, Clark Pacific had a need to expand into multiple sites with multiple phone systems. The Nortel phone system they started with had become outdated and ran out of lines, which forced the company to look into the newer voice over IP (VoIP) technology.

Clark Pacific evaluated various systems, but none seemed to integrate well enough with their Microsoft back office, or carried a price tag that was right for the benefits that would have come with those systems.

As the company continued to grow, a company-wide Lync implementation became a necessity to eliminate the multiple phone systems at each site. Clark Pacific attended a seminar offered by Microsoft Gold Partner, J4 Systems, and ultimately gave J4 Systems the contract to implement Lync. For an expanding company who experimented with various upgrades to its phone systems, Lync was the final solution that met Clark Pacific's needs, and then some. In fact, Lync met needs that they didn't even know they had.



Levi Stadium. Photo courtesy of Clark Pacific.

When each site had different phone systems, they didn't know who was calling from inside and outside of the site. With Lync, there is consistency throughout the company. Not only do they know who is calling and where they are located, but they can see who is online and available at multiple sites with presence features. They know whether they are in a meeting, away from their desk or out of the office.

They were not aware of the location services feature, but it's been very useful. The real-time location updates based on IP Address makes it possible to see which site people are working from. "For example, when I travel to Irwindale, others in the company know where to find me," said IT manager, Allen Cruz.

In a rapidly growing company, organizational charts change too frequently to create and distribute in a timely manner. They could never tell who was who in the organization. If an employee's manager is assigned correctly in Active Directory, a

tree of the employee's leaders and subordinates are displayed. They can easily see a person's manager and which group he belongs to in real-time now. "This feature has been very useful at times, such as finding a person's manager for requesting approvals, or determining which coworkers are in the same group," said Cruz.

Instant messaging (IM) is preferred to email by some employees, because of the multitasking it affords them. They can IM someone during a conference call or a web meeting. They can conference in multiple people at once, if necessary. Video and screen sharing has been a critical asset, as well, enabling IT support staff to share screens with users to fix their problems.

Prior to switching to Lync, Go-To-Meeting was used for online meetings with consultants. Clark Pacific discontinued purchasing more licenses for Go-To-Meeting. Now, everyone in the company has access to the online meeting feature in Lync, instead of only those who were licensed to use Go-To-Meeting. Lync is used for internal company meetings, and even allows for federating with other companies. "Lync Federation has allowed us to better collaborate with our consultants. We can view their Presence and easily initiate IM or Lync Meetings," said Cruz.

Finally, the portability of this phone system is perfect for a company, like Clark Pacific, with employees who frequently travel to multiple sites. Cruz uses his headset, instead of his handset, and barely touches his desk phone now. A lot of people work from hotels or home and plug in a headset to connect to Lync. They can be reached at the same extension, regardless of where they are performing the work. Although it's hard for Cruz to gauge ROI, users really enjoy the features of Lync. "We like it, of course," said Cruz.

Flexible Partnership

J4 was willing to do most of the work onsite at Clark Pacific, because remote access was not allowed for security reasons. I enjoyed working with J4 engineer, Taber Keith. We worked well together. He was willing to assist with other questions related to server migration, DHCP and networking solutions.

- Allen Cruz, IT manager

