

Toshiba Strata CIX Links Borders Between United States and Mexico for Business Telecom Solutions



In today's global economy, country borders are blurred when business telephone conversations are conducted over IP connections that know no boundaries. At San Diego-based Business Telecom Solutions (BTS), a licensed electrical contracting firm recognized internationally for its expertise in technologically advanced communication system design, borders are no boundary. BTS's "Smart Building" turnkey solutions deliver voice, digital CCTV and high-speed Internet pre-wiring for commercial real estate developers primarily focusing on customers in Southern California and Mexico. When San Diego-based BTS decided to move to IP telephony, it turned to Authorized Toshiba Dealer Grupo Mundotel/World Telecom, also of San Diego.

Mission: Migrate BTS to a Converged IP Telephony System

BTS's objective was to create a converged system using IP desk telephones, IP softphones, digital telephones, and analog telephones that would allow cross-border communication between its clients and 70 employees at two locations in the San Diego area and five cities in Mexico, including its Tijuana BC headquarters and branch offices in Guadalajara, Mexico City, Hermosillo and Monterrey.

Grupo Mundotel/World Telecom's general manager Carlos Segovia recommended a Toshiba Strata CIX IP business communication system that would meet BTS's objectives of mixing IP, digital and analog endpoints while reducing overall long distance calling costs and eliminating expensive border-cross private lines. By choosing the Toshiba Strata CIX system, BTS could also save on its system by upgrading from its prior Toshiba digital systems, a real cost savings for Adrian Salinas, IT director of BTS.

Solution: Toshiba Strata CIX IP Telephony for Seven Locations

Grupo Mundotel/World Telecom installed a Toshiba Strata CIX IP business communication system consisting of two Strata CIX200 systems and four remote sites using IP telephones.

Together, the system networks 96 ports at seven locations in San Diego and throughout Mexico. Designed with a centralized, customized auto attendant and voice mail, both external and internal communication is improved by having the auto attendant and voice mail in only one location with bilingual prompts serving all seven locations. Eliminating the need for separate voice mail systems in each branch location saved significantly on equipment and management costs.

The unified dialing plan gave users the ability to transfer calls between locations without incurring any long distance charges. In addition, because all of the users have extensions on the system, regardless of their actual remote locations, it's like they are "in the office" even when they are on the road. This allows them to receive and

process calls just as if they were in the office, including receiving calls, transferring calls, handling conference calls, accessing and saving voice mail, and much more.

Remote access to the system provides efficient system management. The systems operator can remotely access the systems at any of the seven locations from virtually anywhere there is Internet access. Remote administration ranges from simple adds, moves and changes to more complex issues such as call re-routing, voice quality adjustment and more.

The choice of telephones helps BTS's employees work in the mode that makes the most sense for them. While some are happy to use their original digital or analog telephone handset, many have migrated to IP desk telephones or Toshiba's SoftIPT softphone on their laptops. Having their telephones on their laptops allows them to manage their incoming and outgoing calls on their laptops, using headsets, wherever they travel, as long as they have Internet access. Our office phones go anywhere we go. Salinas said, "With the SoftIPT softphone, our office phones goes anywhere we go." About 40 percent of the BTS employees use IP endpoints (IP telephones or softphones) while 60 percent are on digital or analog telephones.

In making the decisions, Toshiba's seven-year manufacturer's warranty helped close the deal. Segovia said, "Toshiba is the only manufacturer to offer a seven-year warranty, which says that Toshiba stands behind its products. The warranty, plus the ability to migrate and re-use older Toshiba equipment saving more than \$45,000 over buying a completely new system, were major factors in BTS's decision to go with Toshiba for their IP telephony needs."

Result #1

Result #1: Met the Goal of Connecting Seven Offices

Utilizing the Toshiba Strata CIX IP business communication system, BTS has accomplished its goal of centralizing its business communication system, improving efficiency for its users across seven widespread locations and saving on both long-distance and equipment costs.

Result #2

Result #2: Saved More Than \$15,000 in Equipment Costs

By migrating to the new Strata CIX IP business communication system from its original Toshiba Strata DK424i and Strata DK16 digital business communication systems, BTS saved more than \$15,000 in hard equipment costs. Because the Strata CIX allows a mix of IP, digital and analog telephones, BTS was able to keep and reuse telephone cards and telephone handsets, including many older Toshiba digital and analog telephones. Being able to re-use the digital and analog telephones also meant there was virtually no learning curve for the new system, with BTS employees having virtually no down time for the switchover.

Result #3

Result #3: Saved \$17,000 per Year in Long Distance and Cross-Border Costs

BTS saves \$13,000 annually in long distance charges by moving to IP telephony, and the company saves an additional \$4,500 annually by eliminating the border-crossing private line. By having all users on the Strata CIX IP business communication system, the company also saves about \$7,500 annually in cell phone costs.

Result #4

Result #4: Improved Efficiency by 35 Percent

Efficiencies were improved by an estimated 35 percent, according to Salinas. He credited this improvement in the system's ability to allow remote workers to be on the call center and by allowing calls to be routed to them just as if they were at their office telephones by using Toshiba IP telephones.

Salinas said, "We used to have to track down people by radio or cell phones, so having a single number to dial makes it much easier to find our mobile workers no matter which side of the border they are on. This also helps our customers because they can dial into our headquarters and be transferred to the person's number, regardless if they are in California or Mexico."

Bottom Line: Toshiba Delivers on the Promise of IP With Strata CIX

According to Salinas, "Toshiba's Strata CIX delivers on the promise of IP telephony with the reliability, efficiency, and migration path of a Toshiba system. Toshiba's IP system helps us succeed in today's borderless business world."

