

Memphis Tours extend communications with Polycom IP Telephony



CASE STUDY

User:
Memphis Tours

Country:
Egypt

Industry:
Tourism

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Background

Established in 1955, Memphis Tours is a private travel agency and tour operator based in Egypt. It is an active member of multiple travel and tourism organizations, including the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the Egyptian Travel Agent Association (ETAA).

Challenges

As a guided tour operator with 3 branches operating around Egypt, Memphis Tours relies heavily on effective communication with potential customers and between staff. The global nature of its clientele and the different time zones they reside in also requires the company to be communicable on a continual basis. To provide customers with a twenty-four hour, toll-free enquiry line, they turned to software application Skype.

Memphis Tour's Chairman, Dr. Yehia Abu El Hassan explains that "it was the poor audio-visual quality of the calls received on Skype" that led them to seek a more effective alternative. "The main problem we faced was the low quality of these phone calls which we sometimes wouldn't be able to receive." We decided to research other methods that would prevent those problems from recurring. The IP phone appeared to be the best solution to the problem."

Solution

To find a suitable IP system, Memphis Tours approached FVC's certified Polycom reseller in the region, ARKAN Integrated Solutions. El Hassan arranged for a Proof of Concept (PoC) presentation on Polycom, with technicians from both teams discussing existing and potential problems and possible solutions. Satisfied, the two companies collaborated on creating a suitable IP Telephony system using Polycom products.

The final IP phone system incorporated consisted of 12 Polycom SoundPoint IP 320SIP IP Phones, and five VegaStream Europa 50 VOIP gateways. The system also included one Digium TDM410, a half-length PCI 2.2-compliant modular gateway card for connecting analogue telephone stations and analogue POTS lines through a PC. The card supports a combination of up to four station or trunk modules for a total of 4 lines. Digium's TDM422BF, a PCI 2.2-compliant modular gateway card that comes with 2 Station and 2 Trunk interfaces, was also used.

Memphis Tours conducted a trial of the new system operating out of its head office in Cairo. The installation presented some initial hiccups, primarily in integrating the company's existing analogue phone line with the IP Telephony system. With assistance





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from ARKAN technicians, they overcame the problem, completed the installation and immediately noticed an improvement.

“We really noticed the difference on the quality and clarity of sound,” pointed out Dr. El Hassan. Pleased with the results, Memphis Tours installed the system in its remaining two branches again noticing the immediate improvement in the quality of communication. “The system made our life easier & connecting with each other is now very simple,” explained Dr. El Hassan.

Begun in late-November 2008 the project was completed in early-January 2009 with the integration of the Hurghada Office into the system.

Result

Dr. El Hassan is “really happy” with the new system, primarily the “very easy way” in which it has enabled Memphis Tour’s staff to communicate between offices.

The system’s benefits have included “great” call quality whether landline or mobile, the ability to receive calls 24 hours a day, low cost calls and an increased availability of extension numbers within the company. Dr. El Hassan also noted a previously unconsidered advantage of the system - the ability to send and receive faxes via email rather than traditional fax machine.

Because of an increase in requirements, Memphis Tours is planning to increase the number of IP telephones it currently has in its system.

