



Success Story

EMIT Inc. Upgrades to VoIP with Asterisk and FreePBX

THE CUSTOMER

As a licensed professional engineering firm with nearly two decades of experience, EMIT Inc. designs and integrates state-of-the-art processes, material handling equipment, and systems to provide custom solutions, such as distribution center conveyor systems, for several key industries. EMIT has proven their engineering prowess by completing thousands of projects, including many complex projects for Fortune 500 companies.

In addition to this, they also serve as a single point of contact for their clients' data center support needs and provide comprehensive support solutions for any server environments. EMIT Inc's Support Services are designed to maintain and maximize the availability of their customers' complex, multi-vendor, multi-platform server and storage infrastructure, while reducing their support costs and delivering the highest standard of service.



CHALLENGES

A respected engineering and technical support firm was experiencing rapid growth, and their telecommunications system could not keep up. Unable to scale their existing solution, the search was on for an affordable alternative.



SOLUTIONS

EMIT found exactly the solution they needed in a customized Asterisk solution utilizing Sangoma hardware and the FreePBX GUI.

Now EMIT is enjoying modern functionality while saving over a thousand dollars a month compared to the legacy system they were using.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

It's a challenge many businesses face — the company is growing rapidly but the company's business telecommunications system is lagging behind. One thing is clear, businesses today are looking for flexibility and versatility in their next phone system. Many companies are finding that in order to expand, they must replace an old digital or outdated analog phone system with a VoIP solution that easily integrates with existing software and hardware, and steadily moves the company towards a long-term Unified Communications (UC) platform that also saves them money.

When Brian Harris, used equipment sales manager at EMIT, attempted to add extension modules to their legacy digital phone system, there weren't enough spots for new phones or sufficient extension modules available. "I wasn't sure what to do. A new phone system was not in the CAPEX budget, and we didn't want the monthly expense of a hosted solution," Harris says. "So I sent out a Tweet seeking help and advice from the Twitter universe." His answer came from Jamie Stapleton, the president of Computer Business Solutions, Inc. (CBSI) in Richmond, Virginia. Stapleton offered a number of solutions, all involving the implementation of Asterisk.

THE SOLUTION FROM SANGOMA

By using a combination of Open Source Asterisk software with Sangoma hardware, technicians can create business phone systems and other communications applications. Asterisk is an economical platform for building a PBX telephony system, or anything from VoIP gateways and IVR servers, to call centers and UC suites.

Harris notes that the 12-year-old legacy system was not utilizing the benefits of VoIP, but instead, ran off two T1 copper phone lines (time-division multiplexing or TDM lines) costing about \$800 a month. As it turned out, the limitations of this phone system were compounded by the restrictions of TDM, the main reason why Harris couldn't add expansion modules.

With Stapleton in Virginia, Harris and his IT team voluntarily took the project forward themselves, with remote backup from CBSI when needed. "Using [Sangoma] cards, we installed the Asterisk system on an old PC," Harris explains. "Jamie also suggested some cost-effective ways to increase performance." These included digital cards produced by Sangoma that offer the highest single-card port density available for use with Asterisk.

EMIT then installed FreePBX, the user-friendly graphical user interface (GUI) that controls and manages the Asterisk software. "It was an economical but applicable way to replace the [legacy system] with VoIP, and it saved us thousands of dollars on a new system," Harris says.

THE RESULTS

Installing Asterisk was just the beginning of the savings the business would enjoy. The team found a way to help EMIT save the \$800 a month by upgrading and replacing the T1s with IP-based SIP trunks that reduced their monthly expense by almost 90%.

"We can now answer the phones through softphones and headsets sitting in front of a computer interface," Harris says. EMIT also uses many other phones, including for conference rooms, all running off Asterisk. "We are no longer limited in how many phones we can add here in Nashville or in Austin."

CBSI's Asterisk solutions and support led EMIT to acquire a number of additional items like a firewall, storage systems including a redundancy backup and cold spare, and more for the Austin location. According to Harris, "Between the cold spare, additional upgrades, converting to VoIP, and internal cost savings, we are saving well over \$1,000 a month. It took less than a month to buy the equipment and make all the changes. The whole new system is highly reliable. I'd say mission accomplished!"