



Converged 3Com network upgrades patient care

CASE STUDY

Community Treatment Inc (USA)

Number of Employees: 200

Location: Sestus, MO

Sites: Six

Vertical Industry: Healthcare

Value Added Reseller: Metropark Communications

Implemented: April 2001

Win over: Southwest Bell, Nortel

hundreds of hours each year reconfiguring the PBX for simple adds, moves, and changes, often having to contract \$65 per hour technicians to complete necessary cross-wiring.

As an alternative to paying \$20,000 to upgrade its PBX system, Comtrea sought a more easily managed, feature-rich voice and data solution that would improve its services to patients and deliver its business-critical applications.

The Challenge

Founded in 1973, Comtrea provides world-class mental health and addiction treatment services to 4,000 clients a year. Employing a dedicated staff of 200 at its Sestus headquarters and five remote clinics throughout eastern Missouri, Comtrea puts patient care first, never turning away someone in need.

Previously, however, the state-funded treatment center used non-integrated AT&T Merlin PBX phone systems whose absence of advanced features hampered its ability to help patients in crises. Lacking a call transfer capability, for instance, receptionists often had to ask patients under duress to hang up and dial a different number to reach the appropriate clinic counselor. Comtrea also struggled with a defective, unreliable voice mail module linked to the Merlin systems that slowed operations and frustrated staff, who often could not retrieve messages. In addition, the center's support services specialist spent

The Solution

After participating in a hands-on demonstration with its value added reseller, Comtrea realized all of its communication objectives with the following 3Com® solution:

- **3Com NBX® 100 Communications System** chassis provide premium-quality, IP-based phone service. The chassis distribute service among six sites in a 50 mile radius via NBX IP Virtual Tie Lines.
- **3Com Ethernet Power Source (EPS)** units reduce electrical wiring plant by providing power to phones via the single voice and data network.
- **SuperStack® II Switch 3300 FX switches** connect the NBX 100 solution to the network and deliver Ethernet links to desktops.

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The Benefits

Chosen over systems from Southwestern Bell and Nortel for its superior price/performance and ease of management, 3Com’s converged voice and data network is a dramatic upgrade over Comtrea’s PBX. In addition to improving patient care, the 3Com solution promptly saved the center \$5,000 by eliminating six analog phone lines in Sestus. Comtrea is also saving thousands of dollars a year in costly service calls and will reduce its long-distance charges by nearly \$6,000 annually when the NBX system is fully deployed in early 2003.

Today, using NBX features such as call transfer, Comtrea instantly transfers patients’ calls among its sites, and the system’s voice mail allows staff to reliably capture and respond to calls from case workers, clients, and clients’ families. “Most importantly, with 3Com, we no longer have to tell clients in the middle of emotional crises to ‘hang up and dial another number,’” said Lisa Rothweiler, Comtrea’s support services manager.

The 3Com solution’s automated attendants further expedite patient care by routing callers to the appropriate extension. Comtrea even programmed the 3Com system to give callers the option to bypass the automated attendants by pressing “0” to reach the receptionist. The NBX platform’s call hunt groups feature rapidly directs patients to Billing and Inpatient Facilities staff and administrative assistants in the CEO’s office.

Using 3Com’s Web-based NBX NetSet™ administration tool, Rothweiler simply plugs NBX handsets into network jacks in seconds to complete all adds, moves, and changes – a cost and time-saving capability that further increases the NBX system’s exceptional low cost of ownership. The 3Com Ethernet Power Source units add to these savings, enabling Comtrea to power its 150 NBX handsets via existing Ethernet cabling without the cost of adding a single electrical outlet.

Comtrea’s 3Com LAN also improves its services by securing access to the center’s key Commercial Mental Health Centers (CMHC) management application. Using the CMHC system, staff streamline patient scheduling, billing, accounts payables, payroll, and medical record keeping.

“Managing our communications is ten times easier with 3Com and so much more cost-effective,” said Rothweiler. “3Com’s NBX system and switching capabilities truly cater to the most basic of human needs—to be heard and attended to in the most sensitive manner possible. Most businesses appreciate these advanced, yet subtle touches. Comtrea can’t do without them.”

Network Diagram

