

# Paper Products Company Saves With VoIP

**BILLHORN CONVERTERS HAS BEEN** in the paper products industry since 1990, offering services including printing and warehousing. Over the years, the company has expanded into six locations in three states, but its communications costs were growing faster than the business.

**Challenge.** Billhorn's existing phone system didn't have voice mail or multiparty conferencing, so the company purchased those services on a pay-as-you-go basis. Each of the company's six locations had its own phone lines and numbers, but there was no easy way to transfer calls from one office to another. More importantly, calls among business locations were placed as ordinary 10-digit toll calls. This had the dual side effects of increasing telephone costs while discouraging interoffice communications. Incoming calls to each location came to the receptionist's desk, so after-hours calls went unanswered.

George Harmon, controller at Billhorn, decided there had to be a better way to manage the company's telephone communications. Harmon contacted TELECO, a Star2Star dealer in nearby Greenville, S.C. A representative from TELECO examined Billhorn's telephone system and phone bills and recommended a Star2Star Business Internet telephone system.

**Solution.** TELECO's technicians installed the Star2Star system alongside Billhorn's existing telephone systems at all six Billhorn locations. Billhorn employees were able to use the new Star2Star platform, including Polycom IP450 phones, to make outgoing and interoffice calls, a strategy that allowed them to become familiar with the new system before the cutover date. Star2Star's number porting specialists transferred all of Billhorn's published and private DID numbers over to Star2Star. On the cutover date, the old phones stopped ringing and incoming calls began routing into the new Star2Star system.

**Results.** The arrival of the Star2Star system had several immediate positive effects on Billhorn's operations. For example, interoffice calls, which had previously been dialed as long-distance, are now free. Every extension in Billhorn's facilities is just five digits away from any other. Billhorn employees can call each other as often and for as long as they like without regard to cost. And, incoming calls at any location can be transferred to any extension, so customers don't have to hang up and dial a different number.

After-hours calls automatically route to a ring group that rings at the other Billhorn locations. Incoming calls to the main office (in the Eastern time zone) can be answered by a receptionist in Louisiana or Washington state up to three hours after the close of business on the East coast. In addition, key employees are reachable any time using Star2Star's "find me-follow me" call routing even if they are out of the office and on their cell phones.



IP telephony saves this paper products company thousands of dollars per year.

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All employees now have access to unlimited voice mail with the option to send new voice mails to their e-mail inboxes. And, telephone conferences, which were previously a pay-as-you-go service, are included in the package and are now widely used, improving communications and increasing collaboration.

Harmon said the Star2Star system permits Billhorn to "operate much more as a close-knit unit now." Perhaps the most impressive result of the change shows up on the bottom line: The Star2Star system saves Billhorn around \$700 in monthly telephone charges.

But the story doesn't end there. Instead of pocketing the savings, Billhorn management used the savings to buy three HD video conferencing systems. The video conferencing systems reduce executive travel expenses and help pull employees together, even though they are scattered across the country. The video conferencing systems also allow Billhorn staff to interact more closely with key customers and suppliers. **CP**