

Cloud-based Communications Can Give You the Inside Track

Shimano, global retailer of bicycles, bicycle parts, fishing tackle and rowing equipment



A bicycle company knows a thing or two about agility. So when Shimano American Corp., the U.S. division of the legendary Japanese bicycle manufacturer, assessed its operations, management realized it had to improve the speed and dexterity of its communications to remain competitive.

"We needed to consolidate," explains Mike Davis, Shimano's Senior Manager of IT. "We had five companies in North America: two on the same [phone] system, all the others on independent systems. We also wanted scalability, and we needed features that helped us internally: extension dialing to reduce interoffice calls, internal videoconferencing and messaging, federated email servers, and the ability to bring all of those systems together."

For flexibility, functionality and ease of administration, the company sought a cloud-based communications solution. And to customize that solution, Shimano American selected Insight, a global provider of information technology (IT) hardware, software and service solutions to business and public sector organizations.

Rolling in the Cloud

"Shimano has a dynamic American office," notes Insight Cloud Specialist Matt Schnurr. "They wanted a system that could grow with them."

For Shimano, growth also meant shedding management headaches. "Shimano spent too much time managing their outdated phone equipment," Schnurr says. "They wanted a state-of-the-art system, with minimum hardware and technical support included. And they asked us to recommend an approach."

Insight conducted a thorough assessment. "Insight's true value is in the consulting we do. We assess what each client currently has and what they want, and give them a front-end assessment," says Schnurr.

Insight recommended a cloud-based, voice over Internet protocol (VoIP)-hosted, collaborative solution through 8x8 Inc., which offers remarkable flexibility. "8x8 gives you a 'softphone,'" Schnurr points out. "You can plug a headset into the side of your laptop and have a virtual office that allows you to click and dial. Then the mobile app allows you to route office calls to all common devices: the iPad®, tablets or smartphones. You also have a videoconferencing solution."

SHIMANO®

Customer: Shimano American

Industry: Global retailer of bicycles, bicycle parts, fishing tackle and rowing equipment

Locations:

Offices in California, Colorado and Canada

8x8 Products: Virtual Office

Number of Extensions: 300+

Primary Reason Chose 8x8:

- Scalability
- Improved flexibility, including mobile apps and ability to connect through multiple devices
- Crisper sound and calls that don't "fall out"
- Easier to manage

Website: www.shimanousa.com

“When we compared vendors, we went feature by feature. 8x8 was one of the truly hosted solutions that didn't have any [on-premise] hardware, and we found it would allow our people to roll calls seamlessly to their cell phones. A lot of our employees travel—domestically and internationally—and need a phone connection to work. With 8x8, we can talk to Japan without paying international phone rates, and our employees have the ability to work remotely.

—Mike Davis,
Shimano's Senior
Manager of IT

8x8's flexibility even extends to the number of lines in use. "It's 100% scalable," Schnurr adds. "You can go to an administrative console and create new users. Or if you downsize a bit and no longer need those lines, you can decommission them and turn them back, as needed."

The cloud-based system is inexpensive to operate. "8x8 bills you at a flat rate per month, which includes all the top-notch features," Schnurr explains. "You don't receive a staggered invoice for how much time or how much long distance used. And 8x8 systems are designed within built-in redundancy. If there's a quake in California, for instance, your service and data will fail over to the next data center, so your business doesn't miss a beat."

8x8 enables Shimano to enjoy these features without having to manage them. "Technical support is included," Schnurr says. "This allowed Shimano to get rid of the on-premises equipment, get on the latest-and-greatest features and give devices the mobile app, while alleviating all the day-to-day hardware management."

Quietly Picking Up Speed

"When we compared vendors, we went feature by feature," Shimano American's Davis recalls. "8x8 was one of the truly hosted solutions that didn't have any [on-premise] hardware, and we found it would allow our people to roll calls seamlessly to their cell phones. A lot of our employees travel — domestically and internationally—and need a phone connection to work. With 8x8, we can talk to Japan without paying international phone rates, and our employees have the ability to work remotely."

In 2013, Insight moved approximately 300 Shimano American users—in the company's California, Colorado and Canadian offices—into the 8x8 system. "The process went relatively smoothly," Davis recalls. "The only hiccups we had were in Irvine [California]. We had a building with a lot of legacy cabling issues. But we redid that wiring, and it has been great from a technical standpoint."

Perhaps the best thing about the transition was that it didn't feel like a transition. "We had zero downtime—which we've had in the past, owing to the age of our hardware," Davis says. "Initially, our users didn't even see it as a transition—just a phone on the

desk. They're still discovering all the new features now."

Shimano's accountants and administrators love the savings, too. "We wanted to leverage the benefits of a cloud system, and we are starting to realize that. We're saving money on our phone bill, on our overall maintenance costs. And of course, we've gained more flexibility."

And the experience with Insight? "They've been a good vendor," Davis says. "From hardware to services, Insight actively participated, followed up on every step and has been very responsive. It has been a win-win across the board."

Find out how 8x8 can help your business. Call **1.866.862.2811** or visit **www.8x8.com**

