

CASE STUDY

Merchants Bank of Indiana Turns to CenturyLink to Upgrade Phone System for Growing Business



At a Glance

Regional Indiana bank uses CenturyLink IQ MPLS Network Solution to upgrade multi-site phone system, lay the foundation for greater data traffic.

Customer:

Merchants Bank of Indiana

Industry:

Banking

Opportunity:

Patchwork of carriers reduces efficient coordination of staff at various branches and limits long-term expansion capabilities for phone-based business.

Solution:

CenturyLink IQ MPLS Network Solution provides bandwidth for growth in both voice and data, enhances overall phone efficiency.



Merchants Bank of Indiana has been expanding on a regional basis around central Indiana. That expansion is fueled through organic growth, acquisition of a community retail bank and the startup of new business lines such as warehouse lending, and a consumer mortgage business.

Merchants Bank operates four branches and a headquarters. Each branch tends to be self-contained — each focused on a separate line of business — though coordination with headquarters and customer interaction still relies on the phone system. Growth in rural areas also drove the need for more coordination among staff that began working on more than one business line as they came into the fold.

“As our business grew we had more people wearing different hats and they needed to talk to more people beyond their department,” said Matt Hostetler, Vice President of IT at Merchants Bank.

Because of the acquisitions and the use of different local carriers around central Indiana, the phone system for the bank as a whole had become a patchwork quilt with no economies of scale, and no provision for future data traffic. This came to a breaking point when Merchants Bank opened its most recent branch in Carmel. Their current configuration did not provide enough bandwidth to ensure quality of service.

This limitation presented the opportunity to either add another phone system node to the system run from headquarters or to improve their interoffice voice network connectivity as a whole.

The experience also raised serious questions about future needs for data bandwidth as the business grew and interdepartmental data exchange became the standard way to do business. The bank decided that a new approach to the phone system was needed.

Challenge

- Lay the foundation for the future in business growth and data traffic
- Achieve economies of scale and cost savings

Solution

- Shift all voice network needs to CenturyLink
- CenturyLink IQ® MPLS Network Solution connecting five sites
- More circuits for voice to drive growth
- Bandwidth available for future data needs

Results

Helping customers rather than troubleshooting

"Everything drastically improved as soon as we put in the new network," Hostetler said.

Dropped calls ceased and Hostetler's small IT staff shifted their focus from troubleshooting the phone system back to providing technology support for the business. Overall costs also dropped by consolidating all their needs to CenturyLink as a new partner.

Hostetler also has much more confidence advising management on the costs of acquisitions and new business development.

"We put a voice solution in place that we can grow into as data traffic expands between sites," Hostetler said.

Hostetler also got an expansion in his small team by relying on CenturyLink's local resources. They stay engaged and help him think about implementation, ongoing support and future needs.

"I wanted people who were going to be on my team," Hostetler said. "That's exactly what I've received with CenturyLink."

"What CenturyLink did was take something off our plate as we look to the future. The comforting thing is that we don't have to buy something new."

Matt Hostetler Vice President of IT at Merchants Bank

Future Plans

More sites, more phones, more data

Merchants Bank continues on its growth path. Hostetler foresees a time when data traffic among branches will increase. But, he knows that his MPLS network is ready for the challenge of increased voice and data traffic.

"What CenturyLink did was take something off our plate as we look to the future," Hostetler said. "The comforting thing is that we don't have to buy something new."

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