

# LAND OF LINCOLN HEALTH

## CASE STUDY



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### SHORETEL CONTACT CENTER AND SIP SERVICES ARE JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED TO MANAGE AGENT PERFORMANCE AND REDUCE TELECOM EXPENSES

**W**hen Land of Lincoln Health Insurance was originally formed in Chicago, IL, they outsourced their call center to third party agencies to handle all inbound phone calls from members and providers since they did not have staff already in place. However, as the company matured and desired more control over the customer service experience, they decided to insource their call center and hire agents so Land of Lincoln Health could provide better quality, manageability, and oversight.

As health care legislation changed and customers sought more affordable insurance options, Land of Lincoln Health experienced what most businesses dream of, a season of rapid and massive growth. Much of the growth was a result of new membership sign-ups, either from individuals or group policies, as well as general inquiries.

On the surface, such an increase in business would appear as a dream come true. “We went from having 3,000 members to 50,000 members to 70,000 members in a matter of three years,” said Eytan Dallal, Vice President of IT at Land of Lincoln Health. “Although we contracted with an answering service to handle the overflow of calls if all agents were busy, we were still limited to the number of available phone lines we purchased. Between agents on calls, calls connected to the answering service, and callers on hold for over an hour, it came to a point where new callers were getting busy signals because we were out of available phone lines, leading to a customer service and reputation nightmare.”

#### ShoreTel Contact Center Solution Administers a Healthy Dose of Call Management

To accommodate the sudden heavy call load, Land of Lincoln Health needed to re-assess their telephony infrastructure. At that time, Windstream was their carrier and provided 12 PRIs, 100 SIP trunks, and toll-free/telecom service, while CT-Pros, a Chicago ShoreTel Platinum Partner was serving as their vendor equipment provider.

“Land of Lincoln Health wasn’t expecting such rapid growth so quickly. In any business where you have everything in-house, such as billing, sales, marketing, and customer service, you need a system that can manage those calls and help your agents service the customer inquiries faster and more efficiently,” states Chris Frey, VP of Op-

erations at CT-Pros. “We recommended upgrading to 500 SIP trunks to help with the heavy inbound call volume, but we also needed to address the operational aspect of the contact center as well.”

CT-Pros recommended incorporating ShoreTel’s contact center solution to address many of the manageability issues Land of Lincoln Health was experiencing with their call center. Once installed and after initial training, agents were able to provide improved customer service using the many convenient features the unified communications system offered.

For example, by using the IM (Instant Messaging) app which is built

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into the unified communications platform, agents could easily view at a glance which co-workers were available to help when assistance was needed. With instant access to the status of other agents and managers, calls were able to be handled faster and with greater efficiency.

Land of Lincoln Health was also able to use the Softphone features which enabled workers to use their PC as a phone and thereby work remotely. Another helpful tool which was put to use was the ability for managers to listen to live agent calls for training and quality control purposes. By providing these tools under a single platform, agents were now able to perform their jobs with greater ease, productivity, and convenience.

#### Self Help IVR Reduces Unnecessary Hold Times and Provides Efficient Customer Service

To provide easier and more convenient ways to service new members, CT-Pros developed an IVR (interactive voice response) system which integrates into Land of Lincoln Health’s member database and their ShoreTel phone system. The new IVR system allows callers to access their account information to perform self-service tasks such as making payments, checking the status of submitted claims, or checking member eligibility. By taking advantage of the self-service IVR, fewer callers were required to speak with a live agent, and therefore

fewer calls were kept on hold.

Dallal confirms the success of the self-service IVR, “Implementing the integration between the ShoreTel Contact Center and our membership database allowed our members to get answers to their questions in a fraction of the time due to the self-service IVR features and allowed our agents to utilize their expertise responding to members on complex questions.”

### Data Driven Metrics Used for Making Correct Diagnosis for Future Planning

Recommended by CT-Pros, Land of Lincoln Health also implemented a data analytics software program by Brightmetrics, which integrates with the ShoreTel platform. Their software monitors call center activity and will compile the gathered metrics into useful reports which is automatically distributed to various personnel within the organization.

Since Land of Lincoln Health had not used a contact center solution before ShoreTel for managing their call center operations, they didn’t have the necessary historical metrics to make strategic and operational decisions which would improve customer service levels moving forward.

After just a few months, Land of Lincoln Health and CT-Pros had obtained enough tangible data to recognize call patterns and trends that enabled them to restructure how and when agents are staffed and how calls are routed.

“CT-Pros doesn’t only answer the questions you ask they also help you think through the questions you didn’t ask.”

“We use Brightmetrics to extract call data from the ShoreTel phone system. Our agents and supervisors use it in real-time to monitor call queues, agent performance, and wrap-up codes. Our executive management uses it to report on call trends, call center performance, and customer satisfaction,” explains Dallal. “Because of Brightmetrics, we can strategically make modifications to our agent’s schedules, training, and call flow routing based on the data it provides.”

### Easing Growing Pains with Burstable SIP Trunks

Because of the seasonality of the business and resulting fluctuations in call volume throughout the year, Land of Lincoln Health found

themselves in a position where they didn’t always need the full bandwidth capacity provided by their PRIs and SIP trunks which they had with Windstream. Dallal decided to reach out again to CT-Pros for advice on finding ways to reduce these high costs without negatively impacting service operations.

“When Land of Lincoln Health first launched, ShoreTel didn’t have SIP Trunk capabilities, but once ShoreTel added full SIP Trunking into their arsenal of services we were able to offer Land of Lincoln Health burstable trunks which their previous carrier did not have,” states Frey. “We were able to migrate their voice and data to ShoreTel and within a week provision their numbers and have them making and receiving calls in a test environment.”

Since burstable SIP Trunks expand and contract as needed to accommodate changes in call volume at any point in time, Land of Lincoln Health was now paying for the call volume used rather than being charged a fixed number of PRIs and trunks regardless of usage. Land of Lincoln Health canceled all PRI and SIP services from Windstream and moved all their numbers and services to ShoreTel’s all-SIP solution. As a result, they experienced a significant 50% cost savings and greater control over their services.

### The Ultimate Prescription for Quality Service

In the case of Land of Lincoln Health, their desire to provide quality service rested on a strategic mix of monitoring call flow and routing, managing call center operations, and reducing telecom expenses. With the right unified communications and contact center solution along with CT-Pros as their ShoreTel partner managing the process, Land of Lincoln Health was able to reach their goals.

Dallal describes his experience by stating, “CT-Pros managed the project, supported the equipment, and most importantly, pressured the previous carrier into concessions in ways we otherwise could not. They support us 24x7 and even contact us proactively if they see trends in our calling patterns that need attention.” Dallal concludes, “Not only does CT-Pros answer the questions you ask, but they also help you think through the questions you didn’t ask. This is due to their vast knowledge and experience in voice systems and designing call center workflows.”