



Cornerstone Operations Group | Hosted Services

Cornerstone Operations Group provides a diverse array of insurance services to customers across the United States. The company's headquarters are in Lancaster, PA.

Formed in 2011 with just a few people, Cornerstone has grown to a staff of 24. The on-site call center keeps five fulltime agents busy - handling nearly 3,200 calls a month - almost a 20% call volume increase from November 2013.

Impressive growth is not the only change Cornerstone saw last year. Trish Varnalis, Director of Operations, made the "leap of faith" to [hosted services](#) in May 2013 after a near miss from Hurricane Sandy the prior fall.

Business Challenge

As Trish recalls, "We watched Hurricane Sandy come up the coast over a very high-risk weekend because we knew we were lacking the flexibility we needed on our existing system. The storm could have done a lot of damage. Lots of lessons were learned."

Once the storm passed, thankfully leaving Cornerstone without damage, Trish knew Cornerstone needed to upgrade to [voice services](#) that were hosted in multiple locations with high availability. During emergencies, Cornerstone is able to easily manage the routing of phone calls to a backup call center.

Appia Solution

A former corporate manager who managed onsite hardware, two 300-seat call centers and *much* more, Trish knew exactly what she wanted. "VoIP companies are a dime a dozen, but not all are equal. I wanted a reduction in cost and a professional company—one that would be our premier partner."

Trish researched and reviewed bids from four vendors. "The costs kept going up." And, as a self-proclaimed "prove it" person, Trish still hadn't found a "company that would show commitment before contract by sharing plans and diagrams. If you can't show me you're not well buttoned-up, I'm not in."

Trish's fifth bid was with [Appia](#), who "sealed the deal" for her with "best pricing, but also, and more importantly, their attitude of 'the customer is our professional partner.'"



Today Trish admits “we were not an easy install. We learned a lot from each other.” But Appia’s commitment, including weekly phone calls and status reports, impressed Trish.

Savings and reliability are just two key elements that have kept Trish beyond satisfied with her selection of Appia. “Since install, we cut over to [hosted services](#) and have never gone back.”

One immediate cost reduction? Trish cites moves, adds, and changes (MACs). “Before, each MAC cost us \$125. We saved \$700 to \$800 a *month* in MAC support alone, right off the bat. With just a little bit of practice and support from the support website, our own staff can make these changes with *zero* previous experience!”

The second biggest savings source for Cornerstone was the ability to join Appia’s large number pool to receive a price break on long distance calls. As Trish explains, “Before Appia, we were always told our company was ‘too small’ to earn a price deal.”

As for lessons learned from Hurricane Sandy? Trish is relieved to say, “Now we can roll all calls from any location to a backup center in less than one minute.”

The Results

“When you don’t own it, gosh, what a difference it makes!” Trish exclaims, continuing with “no more ‘PRI is down’ calls at 2 a.m., or paying for software licenses. And the reliability! Our employees can fully function absolutely anywhere there’s high speed Internet.”

In retrospect, Trish admits that it shouldn’t take a company a hurricane threat to switch to [hosted services](#). “When you own and manage your own data center, you put a lot of pride in it, as well as your engineers. It was a leap of faith, but Appia had everything to do with that. Approaching every client as a ‘unique fit’ is the right way to do business. And when you let go and turn it over to the experts, you realize it *can* be done better. Today, the little guys assume they can’t afford big technology, but with Appia, small companies can enjoy what the big boys do and still save money.”

About Appia Communications

Appia Communications is a leading provider of Cloud-based communication and networking services. Its solutions enable customers to reduce capital spending and operating costs, and enhance productivity and customer care.



Founded in 2001, Appia has operations in Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, St. Louis, Seattle, and Washington, DC. Appia's customers represent every major industry vertical; range from 20 to over 60,000 employees, and are located across the U.S. and Europe.

Appia has been recognized as one of America's fastest - growing private companies by Inc. magazine; one of the fastest-growing solution providers in the technology industry by CRN, and one of the top five managed service providers in the world by MSP Mentor.

For more information, please see www.appiaservices.com or call 877-277-4297.