



Success Story

Crisis Hotline Modernizes and Saves with Switchvox

THE CUSTOMER

Hanover Safe Place (HSP) is a nonprofit organization located in Ashland, Virginia, that provides victims of domestic and sexual abuse with free case management services, emergency shelter, abuse advocacy counselors, and support groups.



CHALLENGES

A nonprofit organization dedicated to creating community awareness around domestic and sexual abuse within Hanover County, Virginia, needed to replace their legacy phone system to obtain voicemail capabilities, preserve confidentiality, and increase office efficiency.



SOLUTIONS

HSP was able to upgrade their phone system and save money with Switchvox's all-inclusive pricing model.

Their solution included:

- The award-winning Switchvox UC platform
- 10 D-Series IP Phones

Thanks to the advanced UC capabilities of Switchvox, HSP created a more efficient workflow that better serviced their clients and found new opportunities for expansion.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

At the beginning of their search for a modern Unified Communications (UC) solution, HSP was still using the legacy phone system left over from the previous occupants of their Ashland location. The sparse system came with four analog phone lines, no voicemail capability, and no ability to transfer calls. There was also no intercom system to page a counselor for incoming client calls.

The office operated on basic communication, meaning employees had to write down messages and phone numbers on a notepad and leave them on the desk of the caseworker, counselor, or staff member to see when they arrived. According to HSP director, Sheree Hedrick, this was not only inefficient but also problematic in terms of the strict federal and state laws their organization must abide by in regards to confidentiality.

“Without voicemail, we could not simply leave communications from or between clients and staff lying around on a desktop for anyone to see,” Hedrick explains. “Especially on weekends, we had to lock up phone messages so the cleaning staff couldn’t see them. You can imagine how awkward and inept our old system was.”

Hedrick says the prompt to finally consider an updated phone system came from a connection at her local Rotary Club. Fellow Rotary member, Kevin Smyth, of Barre Y Lane Communications, recommended Switchvox Unified Communications (UC) solution as the right alternative and replacement for HSP’s legacy phone system. “Kevin knew the right questions to ask and helped us look at all of our options,” Hedrick says. “We told him our needs and explained how important it was for the system and the hotline to be client-centered. The last thing we wanted was for a client to say they tried to call and no one answered, which had happened a couple of times with the old system. We also needed a means for documenting every hotline call, something that had been nearly impossible with any accuracy on the old system.”

The new solution had to be easy to operate, especially transitioning from such an old system. While Hedrick had some extra funding in the budget available for use toward a new system, cost was still an issue. The new system had to be affordable and adaptable to their small, but growing, nonprofit operation.

Because the office was not wired originally for VoIP, Barre Y Lane Communications offered HSP a nonprofit discount and worked hard to piece together what they needed to upgrade at a price point HSP could afford. The wiring was completed in one day, and they upgraded their internet service to business grade speeds.

THE SOLUTION FROM SANGOMA

HSP purchased a Switchvox system and an assortment of 10 D-Series IP phones, as well as a cordless phone hooked up to an analog telephone adapter.

“The more we use the Switchvox system, the more we incorporate its advanced capabilities into our operations, so I was wrong in my first assessment about it being more than we need. In fact, we needed more capability than we knew was available.”

Problems with confidentiality no longer exist. Even with voicemail, some clients don’t want to share details in their counselor or case manager’s voicemail, so if they are out of the office, they can still answer calls out in the field. This provides the counselors the flexibility of working outside of the office or from home.

THE RESULTS

Hedrick says the system was a breeze to learn for everyone at HSP, even for the older employees (like Hedrick herself) who are less familiar with newer technology.

“We can quickly log into the system and track calls, eliminating the documentation problem, and I can also see who is taking calls, how long they are spending with a client on a crisis call, and help to better manage the quality of those calls through the tracking and reporting feature,” Hedrick says. “Another shelter in Richmond shares the 24/7 hotline with us, so we can provide 24/7 service without being staffed 24/7.”

“We have saved an amazing amount of staff time and efficiency,” says Hedrick. “There was always that time when you were busy and forgot to deliver a message, and sometimes paper messages just got lost. Efficiency, follow-through, and the ability to track calls are all important aspects of our organization and part of our responsibility to the client who is already under duress.”

“I received a grant to fund the opening of a second office,” Hedrick says, “and because Barre Y Lane built a Switchvox telephone system that grows with us, we are currently seamlessly linking a wireless phone system at the new satellite office with the main office here in Ashland.”

THE PARTNER

Barre Y Lane Communications is a value-added reseller located in Mechanicsville, Virginia, that provides technology and telecommunications services to a diverse client base.