

ALCATEL-LUCENT'S INDUSTRY LEADING TECHNOLOGY BOOSTS CHINA EASTERN'S GLOBAL CALL CENTER AND VOICE PLATFORM

PASSENGERS AND USERS ENJOY A RICHER EXPERIENCE WHILST COSTS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED



CASE STUDY

MARKET: **TRANSPORTATION**

REGION: **APAC**



Headquartered in Shanghai, China Eastern Airlines Corporation Limited is one of the three main Chinese air transport groups and is an official member of SkyTeam. The airline employs 60,000 people and has a fleet of 400 aircraft which fly to over 150 destinations, serving 70 million travelers a year. It is ranked ninth in the world in terms of total passenger volume.

CHALLENGES

- Business growth for China Eastern meant that their original telephony equipment functionality could no longer meet their requirements for further development
- Growth in passenger traffic and increases in global communication costs have led to an increase in costs for the organization
- Their communications technology was no longer able to provide users with a good user experience

SOLUTIONS

- Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX™ Enterprise Communications Servers (x3) with a Unified Communications server
- Alcatel-Lucent IP Touch™ 4068, 4038 & 4028 handsets for overseas users, offering Multi-Language voice guides and Multi-Time Zone capability
- Alcatel-Lucent OmniTouch™ 8600 My Instant Communicator Desktop and Mobile handset, for conference and collaboration capabilities
- Alcatel-Lucent OmniVista™ 4760 Network Management System and 810 Alcatel-Lucent 4039 Digital Phone
- Genesys Suite Contact Center software includes Genesys Voice Portal IVR and Genesys WorkForce Management

BENEFITS

- Hardware devices were quickly and easily deployed worldwide, meeting the organization's high expectations
- Construction and use of a global voice communications platform has seen communications costs fall by 50 percent; reducing operating costs and increasing competitiveness
- Product performance, stability and scalability have increased with improved satisfaction rates of after-sales service and technical support
- Unified dialing has increased efficient communication throughout the organization

“ALCATEL-LUCENT IS AN INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED BRAND WITH A GOOD REPUTATION, MATCHING CHINA EASTERN’S EMPHASIS ON USER EXPERIENCE.”

Yan Zhenhong, General Manager IT Solution, China Eastern Airlines

WITH THE CONTINUOUS EXPANSION OF THEIR BUSINESS, THE ORIGINAL COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY WAS UNABLE TO MEET CHINA EASTERN’S REQUIREMENTS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

THE AIRLINE NEEDED TO USE NEW IP TECHNOLOGY TO REDUCE OPERATING COSTS, WHILE IMPROVING SATISFACTION WITH THE PASSENGER SERVICE

THE CHALLENGES

China Eastern Airlines is one of China’s three main air transport groups. In recent years, the airline has seen rapid growth in its international business, consequently the company’s original communication system was increasingly unable to meet their requirements, especially as they were interested in further development.

The airline has achieved rapid business growth by seizing the opportunities presented to it through the process of globalization. This growth means that the airline has encountered fresh challenges and needed to upgrade their systems to improve user experience and reduce costs within their organization.

In recent years, China Eastern has continually grown, carrying up to 70 million passengers a year. With the company’s expansion overseas, it has seen an increase in their global communication and operational costs, reducing the competitiveness of the airline.

Furthermore, the inadequacies of China Eastern’s original telephone system were gradually being exposed, and many of its features were unable to meet new requirements. These failings were leading to a poor user experience, potentially limiting the airline’s development and growth.

THE SOLUTION

Construction of a global unified communications platform

For China Eastern, importance was placed on their quality of service, not just for customers but for employees too. Prior to this, the airline had been carrying out a first phase 'Next Generation Network' project, and the overall feeling was that voice communications were strong, but the user experience was weak, and global communication costs were high. Taking this into account, especially for high-end customers, the company decided to install a global voice communications platform. Their requirements included being able to use a uniform telephone number, and to make calls quickly to any department anywhere around the world. Yan Zhenhong, General Manager IT Solution, China Eastern Airlines explains the reasons for his cooperation with Alcatel-Lucent, "Alcatel-Lucent is an internationally renowned brand, and has a good reputation, matching China Eastern's emphasis on the user experience. After competitive bidding process, we selected Alcatel-Lucent. Voice stability was a key factor in the final selection of Alcatel-Lucent."

Most of the communications platform applications are IP based, centered around three OmniPCX Enterprise communications servers, in line with China Eastern's preferred centralized control model. This IP solution was implemented to serve several national branches including Shandong, Beijing and Sichuan, as well as international branches such as Japan, Hong Kong and Los Angeles. All hubs now form part of a communications network, meaning that calls are free of charge. This system has therefore significantly reduced national communication costs. For international calls, it is possible to route the data to Hong Kong and Japan, creating a cost saving of fifty percent.

After establishing their unified communications platform, the role it played in improving efficiency was obvious. Prior to this, when making international calls, employees at China Eastern's offices across the country needed to dial an area code, which made the call process very tedious. Once equipped with a standardized directory of numbers, all departments - especially sales and foreign business - have been helped as they can now dial directly, reducing repetition and time on each phone call. As a consequence, the information transfer rate between China Eastern's departments has improved, impacting their overall efficiency.

CUSTOMER SUMMARY

Customer Name: China Eastern Airlines co., Ltd.

URL: www.ceair.com

Industry: Transportation

Number of users: 7500+ users

“THIS SYSTEM CAN EFFECTIVELY SAVE ON COMMUNICATION COSTS, SO CHARGES FOR LONG-DISTANCE DOMESTIC CALLS ARE NOT MADE. IN TERMS OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS, IT IS POSSIBLE TO ROUTE THE DATA TO MAKE INTERNATIONAL CALLS TO HONG KONG AND JAPAN, SAVING FIFTY PERCENT OF COSTS.”

Yan Zhenhong, General Manager IT Solution, China Eastern Airlines

My Instant Communications

To further enhance the employee user experience, an initial roll out of OmniTouch 8600 My Instant Communicator Desktop and Mobile handsets was implemented in Shanghai and 12 other branches. Initially intended for executives to take advantage of the conference and collaboration capabilities, the solution was equally deployed elsewhere and the benefits of remote collaboration have begun to be seen, in particular with the savings associated with travel.

Call system upgrade

Attention was also turned to the construction of a passenger facing contact center system which had the ability to control branches centrally and be rapidly deployed. Using Alcatel-Lucent's easily deployed hardware, the organization was able to accommodate the merge with Shanghai Airlines and subsequent overseas installations. Product stability alongside rapid and easy deployment were central to China Eastern, and were amongst the main advantages offered by Alcatel Lucent. Yan Zhenhong explains. “At the time, the context was mainly passenger service requirements and matching China Eastern's expanding business scope, which was particularly true after the merger. The original policy focused on the Shanghai office only, but afterwards the focus expanded to the branch offices and ultimately overseas. It was imperative that the system had very strong scalability and the Alcatel-Lucent system met those requirements.”

With Alcatel-Lucent's help, the upgraded call centers now have excellent applications, such as passenger services such as high-end meetings, passenger queries and ticket bookings, using Genesys software.

Passenger Satisfaction

Improvements in customer service have a direct relationship to the airline's success. Air travelers have a large choice of airline companies, so passengers satisfied with their experience develop loyalty. Loyal customers bring great benefits. “Overall, the greatest goal of the call center is to improve passenger service. As far as airline service is concerned, passenger satisfaction is the biggest benefit. We are satisfied with Alcatel-Lucent's solution,” Yan Zhenhong said, when evaluating the system.

Reduced costs, improved user experience

Through cooperation with Alcatel-Lucent, China Eastern's customer service and user experience have been enhanced and improved. Communication costs and overall operation costs have been reduced, with fifty percent cuts to international communications alone.

Stable performance with ongoing technical support

Technically the entire platform is running well, with Yan Zhenhong reporting that Alcatel-Lucent's equipment has operated with no major problems, and is highly stable. Occasional minor problems have occurred, but the Alcatel-Lucent team has responded quickly, calling back within 45 minutes. Not only have emergency failures been dealt with quickly, Alcatel-Lucent have offered long-term solutions where applicable.

NEXT STEPS

With the continual advances in information technology, the aviation industry's future is increasingly dependent on information technology (IT). Opening up new sales channels, reducing the company's operating costs, and improving passenger satisfaction are key and cannot be achieved without technology.

Recently, China Eastern has been ranked first by the Civil Aviation Authorities in safety indicators and, thanks to their investment in IT, their service target ratings have proved its value, vigorously promoting IT throughout the company.

In the future, the airline's investment in IT will continue and based on their positive experience, the cooperation between Alcatel-Lucent and China Eastern will also continue on a deeper and broader level.

China Eastern has expressed a strong interest in Alcatel-Lucent's network infrastructure to support Bring Your Own Device (BYOD). "We are currently researching airport Wi-Fi. We hope to be able to allow passenger terminals the ability to connect to the airport network and view airline related information, including information on China Eastern itself, providing entertainment, games and an online shopping service," Yan Zhenhong enthused. The prospects for further cooperation between Alcatel-Lucent and China Eastern look positive."

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