



FINANCIAL SUCCESS STORY

First Security Bank Deploys ShoreTel across Branch Offices and Profits from Quick Return on Investment

CHALLENGE:

- First Security Bank needed to modernize outdated PBX telephony and unify communications across disparate branch offices.

SOLUTION:

- A ShoreTel UC Solution that centralizes Voice over IP and includes: 617 ShoreTel IP Phones, models IP110, IP115, IP265, IP560, IP 8000; ShoreTel Voice Switches, models SG-30, SG-40, SG-50, SG-60, SG-90, SG-90v, SG-120, SG-T1, SG-T1k; ShoreTel Communicator with Professional, Operator, and Personal Access; ShoreTel Workgroups; ShoreTel Enterprise Service Program

BENEFITS:

- ShoreTel's all-in-one solution addresses the bank's need for operational efficiency, with savings upwards of 80 percent in maintenance, install and management tasks, and a significantly short ROI.
- ShoreTel Communicator delivers a fully integrated, flexible interface that simplifies communications, allowing employees to handle calls from any location with intuitive desktop tools, and improving responsiveness to customers.
- Brilliantly simple and scalable ShoreTel architecture enables First Security Bank IT to easily perform branch installations and MACs for a successful rollout and end-user acceptance.

Bank deploys ShoreTel for a nimble enterprise solution to shave 80 percent of maintenance and usage costs, while providing simple, cohesive communications to customers and staff.

Banking is a business that has evolved from primarily brick-and-mortar buildings to a myriad of anywhere, anytime transactions. Not every bank is able to strike a balance between online efficiency and user-friendly service. Enter First Security Bank. With a vision to be the premier financial services company in Arkansas, First Security focuses on providing responsive, innovative, and secure solutions for their consumers—whether they walk into any of the bank's locations or conduct their business online.

First Security is a privately-held bank headquartered in Searcy, Arkansas. Chartered in 1932, the bank has grown from a single entity located on the corner of Arch and Spring Streets, to 900 employees and 70 branch offices throughout the state, and over \$3.6 billion in assets. From its local community banking network and esteemed investment services to real estate development and mortgage products, First Security is a modern banking success. Key to that success is the bank's ability to

facilitate seamless communication for customers and the community. Unfortunately, the telephone systems were not so modern.

"Communication is essential in any relationship. The tools we use to communicate with customers are crucial to our success, as fewer persons are actually coming inside the bank to transact with us," says Brody Walker, vice president and IT manager at First Security Bank. "A few years ago, each branch was responsible for its own telephony solutions. Branch managers were selecting vendors, voice services, and installation partners. It was very costly to the bank as a whole, and highly inefficient with such disparate systems throughout the enterprise, especially as the bank grew. That's when I brought voice communications under the responsibility of IT. Our communications system needed to be overhauled and centralized so that we could guarantee our customers reliable and efficient methods of interacting with First Security."



Banking on a Better Way to Communicate

Walker had a clear vision of what a centralized Voice over IP framework should accomplish. “We were running on old, expensive, and outdated phone technology. To build a cohesive, efficient system across the entire bank enterprise, it was essential that we start with a central management interface for all systems. A new VoIP solution had to be easy for our employees to use and for my staff to manage. I wanted to ensure that IT would be able to install, configure and maintain the system, and that moves/adds/changes would be simple for our help desk staff to perform,” he explains.

The bank embarked on a journey to find the right communications partner capable of meeting these requirements. Walker wanted to evaluate potential carriers prior to choosing one for the enterprise. “We had locations needing phone systems. I felt that it was a perfect opportunity to try several VoIP solutions at these sites,” he says.

The IT team considered Nortel and Avaya as conventionally proven systems, installing two Nortel sites and two Avaya sites. For a fifth location, Walker wanted to try ShoreTel. “I heard about the ShoreTel solutions in a side conversation in a meeting one day. It was intriguing enough for me to begin a relationship with ShoreTel. I charged one of my engineers with the responsibility of observing the installs by each vendor, and evaluating the complete installs from beginning to end, so we could determine the future of VoIP for First Security,” Walker continues.

While the engineer had previous experience with Nortel, he noted that there was no central management console, there were configuration spreadsheets to build and import, and the overall install was cumbersome. Regarding the Avaya system, the engineer had difficulty shadowing the system installer who was flitting from telnet console to command prompts, clearly not installing a centralized management console.

The engineer had no issue following the ShoreTel installer from TeleComp, a ShoreTel Certified Champion Partner. He noted that TeleComp was able to perform

all configurations via ShoreTel’s web-based console, and that the web-based application was very intuitive.

“We tested three VoIP vendors and hands down, the winner was ShoreTel. The ease of use, the scalability, and the answer to our need for centralized, unified IP-based communications—it was all there,” says Walker.

Balancing Simplicity and Efficiency

First Security Bank selected a ShoreTel UC Solution that comprises ShoreTel IP Phones of various models, ShoreTel Voice Switches, and ShoreTel Communicator with Professional, Operator, and Personal Access. The ShoreTel’s unified communications platform distributes intelligence over a unique and scalable architecture, and delivers complete visibility into the system for progressive telephony and plug-and-play growth.

The bank also engaged the ShoreTel Enterprise Service Program for comprehensive ongoing support, which includes 24-hour telephone technical assistance; advanced hardware replacement; downloadable software patches, updates and upgrades; admittance to web-based instructor-led courses; and unlimited secure access to the ShoreCare Web portal.

ShoreTel Communicator provides the bank with a fully integrated and flexible interface that simplifies communications for customers and employees. The bank’s operators and receptionists can use Communicator with Operator Access to deliver high levels of personalized service, while Communicator with Professional Access grants more advanced aspects of interaction such as instant messaging, softphone and high-quality video for call handling.

“Our employees are finding the ShoreTel system very simple and effective for their needs. Regardless of location, they are able to rely on a uniform solution that streamlines communication. When customers call, the ShoreTel system makes it very easy to find the right person the first time,” reports Walker.

First Security Bank implemented its ShoreTel Unified Communications Solution

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with the help of TeleComp. To train end users at smaller locations, Walker had his team perform onsite training at the time of installation. For the larger branches, he outsourced the training to TeleComp.

“The TeleComp team really made sure that we had a cost-effective and reliable solution—the right solution for us. They were keen to help us lower bottom line expenses while ensuring we also could accomplish our business objectives,” Walker says.

Making a Statement with ShoreTel UC

First Security Bank is now depositing savings on time, costs, and complexities. With an all-in-one solution from ShoreTel that addresses the bank’s need for operational efficiency and customer service, Walker is already looking to the future again. “We have a standardized VoIP framework for the company, which means a single system to know how to support. We’re in the process of integrating SIP technology in our enterprise, which is much cheaper than our existing PRI for connecting the VoIP to PTSN. It’ll also leverage disaster routing should an outage occur,” he details.

One big project that was recently completed at First Security Bank was virtualizing their ShoreTel server. ShoreTel has earned VMware Ready™ status, a detailed evaluation and testing process managed by VMware to ensure that partners makes the best use of VMware technologies and are deployment-ready in

customer environments. By deploying ShoreTel into First Security Bank’s virtualized environment, the requirement for physical phone servers shrinks, as do the related power, cooling and space consumption costs. “Migrating to the virtual environment has provided us dynamic resource allocation to the ShoreWare Director. In addition we are using VMotion and HA, as well as SRM at our disaster recovery site,” explains Brody.

Banks have a rigid habit of counting and calculating things. At First Security, Walker has been totaling the savings since deploying ShoreTel across the enterprise. He measured the return on investment by comparing the current cost of remaining legacy services with the ShoreTel solution for any given location, and looking at the cost of monthly carrier fees for local services. “For the branches we’ve completed, we’ve seen savings upwards of 80 percent. It has made for a significantly short ROI. The bank’s CEO is definitely interested in our project completion which will boost savings even more,” Walker maintains.

The bottom line? Walker is sold on ShoreTel. “Early on, ShoreTel seemed to depend on grassroots growth. Great solutions are those you can talk about confidently, knowing that there’s significant value to your organization. While I still talk up ShoreTel with other organizations and while it still may be experiencing grassroots growth, the solution is now speaking for itself, and the word is good. Really good,” he closes.

About ShoreTel

ShoreTel is a provider of business communication solutions whose brilliantly simple unified communications platforms, applications and mobile UC solutions promise a new rhythm of workforce engagement and collaboration. With costly complexity eliminated by design from its award winning, all-in-one IP phone system, UC and contact center solution, and its industry leading hosted business phone system, workers enjoy a freedom and self-reliance that other providers can’t match. Users have full control to engage and collaborate, no matter the time, place or device, for the lowest cost and demand on IT resources in the industry. ShoreTel is headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, and has regional offices and partners worldwide. For more information, visit shoretel.com or shoretelsky.com



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