

Manufacturing Company Saves Money and Improves Productivity with 8x8 Unified Cloud Communications

Foot Levelers, the world's leading manufacturer of custom orthotics



Foot Levelers, based in Roanoke, VA, is the world's largest manufacturer of custom orthotics. It is highly dependent on its phone system, both internally—connecting remote workers, shop floor employees and headquarters-based staff—and for communicating with customers. The company was looking at a \$100,000 cost to replace its existing system but instead, Foot Levelers installed 8x8 Virtual Office. The result was minimal up-front cost, unprecedented uptime, and the seamless integration of its globally-dispersed workforce.

Foot Levelers, Inc. has been in business for 65 years, utilizing its US-based manufacturing facilities to create a broad range of custom devices to relieve or correct orthopedic problems, as well as rehabilitation equipment. The company's goal is to help correct the underlying causes of pain in the feet, legs, hips, back and neck. Foot Levelers is an outspoken advocate of the benefits of using well-designed orthotics to help patients avoid more costly treatments such as drugs and surgery.

Coping with an Aging Phone System

The Foot Levelers headquarters and manufacturing plant in Virginia had an aging on-premises office phone system sourced from a well-known supplier of single-function communications equipment. Mike Chittum, Director of Information Security, explained, "Our legacy system was extremely time consuming and required a very specific skillset to keep it up and running. It needed sizable amounts of dedicated hardware and wiring, and was difficult to administer."

The phone system was reaching the end of its useful life and Chittum estimated that a similarly configured replacement would cost between \$80,000 and \$120,000. In addition, the company had an expensive Primary Rate Interface (PRI) contract with the local phone company for voice and data that would still be needed if the decision was made to select a traditional on-premises solution.

Chittum recalled, "We already are using a cloud-based contact center system for our primary 800-numbers, and the benefits of taking a virtual approach compelled us to look at a cloud solution for our phone system."



Customer: Foot Levelers

Industry: Manufacturing

Locations: Roanoke, VA

8x8 Products: 8x8 Virtual Office

Number of Extensions: 120

Connectivity: 100Mbps fiber at the factory, 10Mbps in remote offices

Favorite 8x8 Features:

Conferencing, instant messaging, softphones

Primary reasons chose 8x8:

Reliability, cost, user features, breadth of solutions

Previous phone system: Avaya

Website: www.footlevelers.com

Seeking a Reliable, Flexible Cloud Communications Solution

Chittum conducted a thorough investigation of cloud-based business phone vendors; he looked at analyst reports to identify the major players, and sought the advice of two trusted value-added resellers. In his research, Chittum gave particular attention to three criteria: stability, price and usability.

"We pride ourselves on the excellent service we give our customers and a key contributor to this is having a stable phone system. It's imperative to have a solution that is reliable and that gives us great voice quality," he pointed out. "I'm always sensitive to financial considerations, so overhead and cost of maintenance were important factors as well. We also were excited with the potential of the additional functionality and usability for our staff that we'd gain by moving to a cloud-based communications system."

Ultimately, Chittum narrowed the options down to two vendors: one of which was 8x8. He was impressed looking at reports that showed services and uptime for 8x8 customers were far better than the competition. Quite coincidentally, while being picked up for a lunch appointment that was entirely unrelated to phones, he got to witness the flexibility of 8x8. "The vendor I was meeting was on his cell phone when he arrived, but unprompted, when the call ended he mentioned that he'd started the conversation on his office phone and it had seamlessly switched to his cell as he left to meet me," recounted Chittum. "He said how happy he was with his company's move to 8x8."

Taking this unprompted reference as a final confirmation, Chittum selected 8x8.

A Smooth Implementation

Foot Levelers initially did a pilot with six phones in its call center, followed by a rollout of the softphone client to the field-based sales force. The ease of implementation gave Chittum the confidence to deploy to the entire Roanoke facility all at once. "The whole project was very well organized and efficient. It was a testament to 8x8 and the quality of its deployment services. After the initial pilot, I pretty much did the whole 8x8 cut over myself. Support from the 8x8 services organization was invaluable in allowing me to complete the deployment without losing any sleep," he noted. After Roanoke, the company completed the rollout to its Canadian and Australian offices.

More Features and Improved Productivity

8x8 Virtual Office integrates seamlessly with the Foot Levelers Salesforce instance and its call center application. The 8x8 softphone technology enables employees to route their phone numbers to virtually any telephone or device, irrespective of location. Messaging, faxing and full remote meeting functionality are all built-in.

"The system interconnects our satellite offices with headquarters and the manufacturing facilities. Our remote staff can now message and talk anywhere using one platform. It's pretty amazing," enthused Chittum.

The 8x8 Virtual Office Desktop app has been a productivity gain for Foot Levelers, allowing approved employees to work from home. Chittum anticipates that in the future, even call center employees may be able to work remotely when inclement weather prevents travel to the office.

The ability to add the 8x8 Virtual Contact Center was an important influence in Chittum's decision. While Foot Levelers currently uses another product, the company is considering migrating to the 8x8 solution. "I don't like dealing with multiple vendors because when there's a problem I have to figure out whose issue it is," he remarked. "Having integrated phone and contact center systems removes barriers and just gives us one platform to support."



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—**Mike Chittum**, Director of Information Security, Foot Levelers

Cost Savings and More Uptime

The move to 8x8 has been a big win for the orthotic manufacturer. Downtime is no longer an issue. Sales people are more productive with the conference bridge and instant messaging capabilities. Mobile employees are making extensive use of having the 8x8 mobile application on their cell phones. Remote training sessions with doctors now run more efficiently with 8x8 Virtual Office Meetings.

Being able to remove the legacy system's hardware has been a major benefit: Chittum observed, "We don't have to worry about maintaining the equipment and now I can definitely accomplish more."

Chittum has been happy with the cost savings. Having the built-in conference bridge and Virtual Office Meetings capabilities has meant the company doesn't have to pay for separate licenses for those services. "We avoided spending \$100,000 on a new phone system—our up-front cost was minimal—and overall savings have been at least \$1,500 a month. We're able to offer the entire company—including our remote workers and manufacturing staff—the ability to reach each other however and wherever they want to be reached," he concluded.

For more information, call **1.866.862.2811** or visit www.8x8.com

