

8x8 Cloud Communications Reduce Time-Consuming System Maintenance for Nationwide Fitness Franchise

UFC Gym, Fitness and Training Centers



Managing multiple hardware PBXs for multiple UFC GYM locations used to be a major headache for IT Director Greg Goodman. Troubleshooting problems, configuring systems and setting up new facilities took up the bulk of his time. Since UFC GYM switched to 8x8 cloud communications in 2013, Goodman is a much happier man with a lot more time on his hands—time he now spends managing high-level IT issues and overseeing the company's nationwide expansion.

UFC GYM is the first major brand extension of the Ultimate Fighting Championship, the world leader in the sport of mixed martial arts (MMA). In alliance with New Evolution Ventures, developers of many of the world's most successful fitness brands, UFC GYM has something for all ages and fitness levels, offering a full-range of group fitness classes, private MMA training, personal and group dynamic training, plus MMA-style youth programming. As the first to combine the world of mixed martial arts and fitness, UFC GYM's TRAIN DIFFERENT® approach has developed an atmosphere where members can see immediate results.

Managing Individual PBXs at Multiple Locations Took Too Much Time

Headquartered in Santa Ana, California, UFC GYM has six other California fitness facilities, as well as two signature gyms in Honolulu and one in Long Island, New York. Before the company implemented 8x8 cloud communications in August 2013, each of these locations had its own hardware PBX, a situation that cost IT Director Greg Goodman and his team many wasted hours.

"Technically our phone systems did work," he recalls, "but they were very hard to manage. Setup was a big issue. It often took us 30 man-hours to install and configure the phone system in a new location."

System maintenance was another challenge for Goodman and his team.

"We could only access the system by dialing in remotely from a specific location," Goodman says. "It was a pain to do, and not at all convenient."



Customer: UFC GYM

Industry: Fitness and Franchise

Locations: 7 locations in California, including headquarters in Santa Ana; 2 in Honolulu; 1 in Long Island, New York

Previous Phone System: Individual premises-based PBXs in each location

8x8 Product: Virtual Office

Lines Deployed to Date: 234

Favorite 8x8 Features: Faster setup of new locations and reduced system maintenance

Primary reason chose 8x8: Wanted to connect all locations and eliminate PBX hardware

Website: www.ufcgy.com



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—**Greg Goodman**
IT Director
UFC GYM

Setting up New Locations Now Requires Less Than An Hour

All that changed when UFC GYM eliminated its individual hardware PBXs, and unified its U.S. locations on the 8x8 telephony platform. According to Goodman, setting up new locations now takes much less time and effort.

“Before, there were a million steps,” he says. “We had to order equipment, wait for it to arrive, work with the carrier and configure devices. The whole process took days, or even weeks. With 8x8, we just order new phone numbers and plug in the phones when they arrive. We can literally have a new location up and running within the hour.”

Moving to the Cloud Means No More Maintenance—and No More Lost Sleep

These days, Goodman spends a lot less time troubleshooting phone system problems as well. Back in the day, he often dealt with call quality issues, software updates, and equipment maintenance.

Not anymore.

“Our 8x8 phone system is fully hosted, so there's no software to update or hardware to fix,” he says. “Issues are very rare, and when they do arise, 8x8 takes care of them. Before, a simple thing like a Windows update could throw our whole phone system out of whack, and we'd have to spend hours troubleshooting it. Now that everything's in the cloud, we don't have to worry about a PC blue-screening.”

Goodman admits he was previously committed to hands-on system management and reluctant to embrace cloud-based hosting.

“I was concerned we wouldn't have control over the phone system if we moved it to the cloud,” he explains. “But 8x8 provides all the management tools we need—and we can access the system from any web browser. It's really a win-win: we have the control we need, and 8x8 takes care of the rest. I don't lose sleep anymore worrying about our phones going down.”

Extension Dialing Streamlines Employee-to-Employee Calls

With the nationwide expansion of the UFC brand, connecting the company's geographically dispersed locations has been another key benefit of 8x8 cloud communications. Employees now dial extensions to reach colleagues at any facility. They can also call directly, whereas previously calls had to go through the front desk. Goodman particularly likes the fact that call recipients can immediately see who is calling them.

“Before you could see which location was calling, but you didn't know who the actual caller was,” he explains. “Now our employees know when I'm calling and vice versa. Plus, not having to go through the front desk saves a lot of time, and time is definitely money in our business.”

Ring Groups Ensure Live Answering at the Front Desk

At UFC GYM locations, outside calls are answered live by front desk staff. To make that process efficient for both employees and callers, the company uses 8x8 ring groups. When a call comes in, anyone in the ring group can answer it. This gives staff much-needed flexibility when the front desk is busy, and reduces wait times for callers.



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Flexible Features Support Your Mobile Device of Choice

Like many IT professionals, Goodman is often on the move with his laptop. When working remotely, he prefers to use the 8x8 soft phone client on his computer instead of his cell phone, because the headset is more comfortable. Other members of his IT team, however, prefer to use the 8x8 mobile app for their smartphones. The great thing is, it doesn't matter which device they use; 8x8 keeps everyone connected.

"When I use my laptop as a phone, no one has any idea I'm not at my desk," says Goodman. "I can go practically anywhere with 8x8."

Move to the Cloud

Looking back at how his work environment has changed since UFC GYM moved to 8x8 cloud communications, Goodman believes he has become more productive.

"I spend very little time managing our 8x8 phone system. It works so well, I actually don't even think about it much!"

Goodman also believes IT managers who worry that hosted VoIP is not reliable enough for their companies need to update their thinking.

"Hosted VoIP is a mature technology that's come a long way from the days of dropped calls and poor voice quality," he proclaims. "That's yesterday's news. When you implement a top-quality system from an industry leader like 8x8, you get hosted VoIP that's as reliable as traditional landlines. There's no reason not to move your communications to the cloud these days."

Find out how 8x8 can help your business. Call **1.866.862.2811** or visit **www.8x8.com**

