

UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS UNITES LAW FIRM'S OFFICES

Keller Schroeder helps Bamberger, Foreman, Oswald and Hahn, LLP create a seamless voice and video communications infrastructure with Cisco Unified Communications.

Bamberger, Foreman, Oswald and Hahn, LLP (Bamberger) is a full-service law firm with a strong regional presence throughout Southern Indiana and in the state capital. Headquartered in Evansville, the 50-year-old firm has branch offices in Indianapolis, Mt. Vernon, Poseyville, Princeton and Vincennes, serving a broad range of business, individual and government clients.

Bamberger utilizes computer technology extensively in its ever-expanding law practice, but until recently had an aging phone system that was no longer serving its needs. Each location had its own PBX, and the firm wanted to utilize Unified Communications technology to unite its offices with a single communications solution. Bamberger sent out an RFP to several technology providers and selected Keller Schroeder to handle the project.

"Keller Schroeder had the most depth of experience and offered all of the services that we needed — including the initial consulting and design, network upgrades, system implementation, and training," said Bamberger IT Administrator Gerald Duncan. "Most of the others could offer only portions but Keller Schroeder was able to offer the whole package."

The Cisco Unified Communications system enables the offices to work together more cohesive-

ly. Today, the receptionist in Evansville can take all incoming calls and route them to individuals at the various offices as needed. Internally, attorneys and staff are better able to serve clients thanks to the communications infrastructure.

"Everyone feels a little closer and more united with one phone system," said Duncan. "We're able to tell at a glance who's in the office, who's on the phone, regardless of what office they're in. We can easily transfer calls to voice mail, or if the caller needs immediate assistance we can find someone else who can help them. Even though we're in six different locations, we work together as one."

FEATURES AND BENEFITS

Keller Schroeder's first task was to help Bamberger select the right system for its needs. The firm had narrowed it down to two possible platforms, and Keller Schroeder recommended the Cisco Unified Communications solution. Cisco offered all the features Bamberger was looking for and has the best reputation in the marketplace.

"I would not be as happy with our system if we had gone down a notch in terms of features," said Bamberger Managing Partner Terry Farmer. "It is worth the money and time to get it deployed properly."

Farmer agrees that the contacts list with status lights has been very helpful, and says that everyone appreciates the ability to retrieve voice mail from their e-mail inboxes using a Smartphone device. In addition, attorneys and staff are eager to find new ways to utilize the system.

"We've gone back and done voluntary in-house training on various features and we usually get 10 or 15 people to give up their lunch hour to

SOLUTION HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Keller Schroeder deploys a Cisco Unified Communications solution to bring Bamberger's locations together with a single phone system and provide advanced features.
- ◆ Keller Schroeder had the skills and experience to deliver a turnkey solution, including consulting and design, network upgrades, system implementation, and training.
- ◆ IP telephony solution simplifies phone system administration and makes it easy for Bamberger's staff to see who's on the phone and transfer calls regardless of location.
- ◆ Videoconferencing features save time and money and improve client services by enabling face-to-face meetings without travel.



attend. The fact that these sessions have all been well attended tells me that people really like the system and want to know more about it.”

From an IT perspective, the new system is easier to administer, plus Keller Schroeder upgraded Bamberger’s entire network infrastructure to better support the IP telephony technology and improve overall network performance. Throughout the project, Keller Schroeder was able to respond on the fly to changing requirements.

“We spent a long time internally thinking through how we wanted things to work and would come up with issues and different ways of doing it,” said Farmer. “The folks on site were open to digging in and finding solutions for us. I was very impressed with their ability.”

SEEING IS BELIEVING

The feature that has perhaps the most potential is point-to-point videoconferencing. Keller Schroeder installed video cameras in each Bamberger location so that an attorney meeting with a client in a branch office can set up a face-to-face meeting with, say, a specialist in the Evansville headquarters.

“The IP telephony system makes it so simple — if each person has a camera, the video begins when you dial their extension,” said Duncan. “And the quality of the Cisco Presence technology is wonderful. That’s one of the reasons we chose the Cisco solution.”

Point-to-point videoconferencing is much more than a “gee-whiz” feature. According to Bamberger Director of Development Kim Jewell, the technology saves the firm time and money.

“We are able to videoconference with our team up in Indianapolis without having them spend three and a half hours driving here to meet face to face,” she said. “We’re also able to meet face to face with our clients without asking them drive to our headquarters or our Indianapolis office. There are time savings, cost savings, and a lot of other intangibles associated with it. Plus, you don’t have to plan so far in advance because it’s not going to cost you a whole day. People are much more accessible.”

Bamberger was recently able to offer a continuing education course for Evansville area attorneys thanks to its videoconferencing capabilities. The speaker delivered her presentation from Indianapolis, saving time and travel costs.

“Anyone who’s licensed to practice has to take continuing education courses to keep their license. Although a small variety of courses are offered in Evansville, typically attorneys have to go to Indianapolis to take classes. Because of our phone system and facilities large enough to accommodate a conference, we became the first law firm in our area to host a continuing education course within our headquarters. It was done through the Evansville Bar Association and was very well received,” said Jewell.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Keller Schroeder provided training that made the transition to the new system smooth. Bamberger opted for a “train-the-trainer” approach, in which the Keller Schroeder team trained the firm’s IT staff so that they could in turn train other personnel.

“Our IT staff is very comfortable doing training, so we went from a heavy emphasis on Keller Schroeder training everyone to a train-the-trainer format,” Farmer said. “The Keller Schroeder team was able to help us with what we needed as opposed to what we contracted for. That was very much appreciated.”

“One of the first things I did as a new employee was go through phone training. It could not have been better,” said Jewell. “At first I thought, you’re kidding me — you’re going to train me on how to use the phone? But there are many different facets of this system. I spent probably an hour with one of our in-house IT staff and she walked me through all of the different features and answered my questions. She was very good. I could tell that she was very well prepared.”

The Cisco Unified Communications solution designed and implemented by Keller Schroeder has saved Bamberger money but Farmer says the emphasis has been on the ability of the system to enhance productivity and client service. From his perspective, the popularity of the system adds validation of the benefits it brings to the firm.

“I’ve been in management for over 20 years and this is my third phone system,” said Farmer. “This is one of the few things I’ve ever rolled out that everyone has been universally happy with. It’s been very well received.”

For more information on Bamberger, Foreman, Oswald and Hahn, LLP, visit their website at www.bamberger.com.

Founded in 1978, Keller Schroeder is an employee-owned information technology consulting services firm, and a value-added reseller and systems integrator of hardware and software products. As a “technology company in the performance improvement business,” their skilled practice areas include:

- ◆ IT Consulting
- ◆ Websites/Intranets/Extranets
- ◆ Application Development and Integration
- ◆ Network Infrastructure
- ◆ Unified Communications (VoIP)
- ◆ Security Assessments
- ◆ Network and Server Monitoring
- ◆ Technical Staffing

For additional information about Keller Schroeder, visit us at: www.kellerschroeder.com.