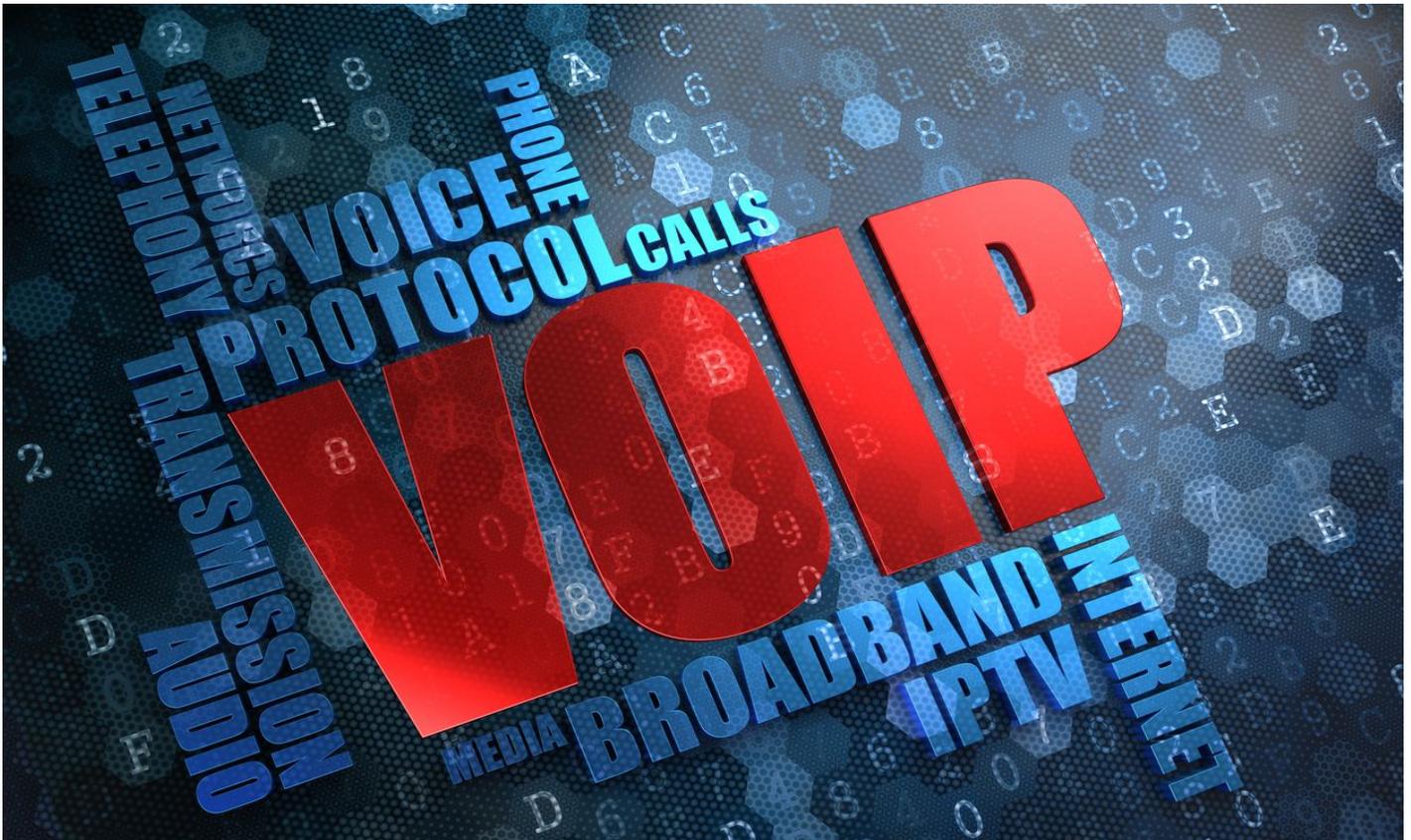# Case Study:

Pennsylvania Bar Association
Your Other Partner

Pennsylvania Bar Association Cuts Costs and Improves Productivity with an Open Source VoIP Solution from iCepts Technology Group, Inc.

Serving over 29,000 members as well as the general public, the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA) provides a wide range of services including legal practice support, an ethics hotline, claims repair hotline, legal referrals and more. The organization's critical role in the community and the legal profession drives a requirement for high service levels, especially regarding telephony and other methods of contact.

Prior to its move to a [Voice](over) [over](IP) [IP](over) (VoIP) solution, the PBA struggled with an outdated, analog PBX telephone exchange. This system was unsupported, and being unable to recover from a crash was a real concern. Upgrading to the features and flexibility of a modern, digital phone system ultimately became imperative.

The Challenge:
Tapping into the right advice and expertise to ensure success

Like many smaller organizations, the PBA had no prior direct experience with VoIP. Initially they sought guidance on how best to evaluate the many options available, including what capabilities would be most useful.

According to Al Trosky, Director of Information Systems at the PBA, "We knew we wanted a digital, VoIP system—but beyond that we didn't really know what we wanted."

Searching the web for a local solution provider, Mr. Trosky connected with iCepts: "I made a call, and Dave Baddorf [Senior Infrastructure Engineer at iCepts] came down to visit us. We recognized right away that he knew what he was doing."

Shortly thereafter the PBA engaged iCepts Technology Group, Inc. There was a lot of planning ahead of time to ensure a smooth implementation. As with any new technology solution, iCepts recommended a thorough consultation on this project. After this planning step, the Pennsylvania Bar Associations' open source VoIP system went live on January 2, 2013. The rollout was completed in one day with minimal impact to staff and clients. "It went great!" emphasizes Mr. Trosky.

> *"Our experience with iCepts has been exceptional." Alan Trosky-Director of Information System; Pennsylvania Bar Association.*

The Solution:
Feature-rich digital telephony that supports key business processes and delivers solid productivity benefits.

The PBA's new VoIP system supports all their long standing business processes, while also enabling new ways of working that enhance productivity and convenience.

"We have about 50 telephones on our network," Mr. Trosky explains. "One of the features we absolutely needed from our new system was support for our Service Center procedures.

"When our members or others call us for any reason, they're directed to the Service Center first. Then their call is routed to a queue, and we have several operators that take calls from that queue.

"Also we needed the ability to move a call to an available operator automatically, or enable the caller to leave a message or continue to wait in the queue if all operators were busy," adds Mr. Trosky. "The new system handles all that." Call clarity is also excellent, especially compared to the old system.

A further major benefit of the new system is convenience, which translates into greater productivity. "You wouldn't know it, but I'm talking to you on my iPad Mini right now," Mr. Trosky chuckles. "If I'm at home on my PC it works equally well."

When a call to an employee's phone extension at work goes unanswered, the system's "Follow Me" feature automatically rings alternate devices and numbers (including softphones like desktop computers, laptops, tablets and other mobile devices) in a preferred sequence until the recipient answers; otherwise the caller can optionally leave a message in the recipient's voice mailbox. The result is more timely communication, less time wasted trying to connect with people, and fewer delays in performing tasks and making decisions.

Another productivity-enhancing feature of the new system is group paging, which reduces distractions and simplifies reaching people when they aren't at their desks. Mr. Trosky clarifies: "We have a three-zone campus. Instead of paging the entire campus at the same time, we can just page someone in whatever zone their department is in."

A customized VoIP experience can be obtained with crystal clear sound quality and even a computerized desktop phone icon called a "softphone."

The Results:

Reduced cost, simplified maintenance, enhanced reporting and total reliability.

Since implementing its VoIP phone system, the PBA has cut telephony-related costs, radically improved reliability and enhanced organizational decision support.

For many SMBs, an inherent advantage of open source, VoIP-based telephony is [reduced upfront cost and lower total cost of ownership](TCO). The entire FreePBX and Asterisk solution is entirely open-source. This means that there is no charge for this software, no licensing cost and no ongoing maintenance costs. You pay only for the hardware, installation service, and your telephone lines.

"There's a definite savings for us compared with the old system," Mr. Trosky concurs. "I haven't done a formal cost analysis, but at this point I'd say the system has already paid for itself." At iCepts, Dave Baddorf forecast cost savings projections of $149,000 over a nine-year period based on the PBA's previous phone system and what they were paying before.

Added bottom-line benefits take the form of reduced maintenance effort and accelerated workflows. "Of course, we also wanted the ability to maintain the VoIP system from a desktop PC," Mr. Trosky continues. "To maintain the old system, we had to go down to the basement and type UNIX text commands on a green-screen console."

The new system is so easy to maintain that no special training is required beyond on-the-job experience. "Our network manager just jumped right in and started maintaining it without any problems," Mr. Trosky notes.

Simple but powerful reporting capabilities add further value. Timely, precise reports better enable managers to optimize service levels and optimize allocation of staff. Many reports are built into the system, and you can optionally create customized reports as well.

The system stores call data in a MySQL database log, which maintainers can query to generate web-based reports using code they write or open source tools. "If you can do any programming at all, you won't have any problem with it," states Mr. Trosky.

For example, the PBA can easily track phone usage for its lawyer referral service and membership service center extensions. "I can give department directors a clear look at what's going on with their call volume and whether they need to add telephone extensions, deal with spikes or dips in call volume, and so on—it's a great tool for us," Mr. Trosky describes.

But perhaps the biggest benefit of the new system is its reliability. Robust telephone service is vital to the PBA's ability to fulfill its mission, and is central to its reputation and ultimately its members' satisfaction.

"The one thing you don't want to do is lose a call with a member," stresses Mr. Trosky. "Reliability of the new system has been 100%. We have not had a single issue since we've been using it."

iCepts' reliability has been equally solid. "Our experience with iCepts has been exceptional," Mr. Trosky says. "I couldn't think of anything negative to say even if I wanted to."

The response from iCepts if we have any questions or issues is always very prompt," Mr. Trosky concludes. "We even nicknamed Dave Baddorf from iCepts 'Data' after the android character on *Star Trek Next Generation*. We joke that he's a computer—he really gets the job done."

About iCepts Technology Group, Inc.

Since 1980, iCepts Technology Group, Inc., a 100% employee-owned company, has been working with wholesale distributors, manufacturers, and other industries with various supply chain management and other technology solutions.

Our consistent goal is to leverage our vast industry experience to partner with organizations to achieve greater efficiency, streamline operations and gain access to vital business reporting in order to stay competitive plus profitable through the use of technology.

Learn more about iCepts:

iCepts Technology Group, Inc.
Supply Chain and Technology Experts
1301 Fulling Mill Road
Middletown, PA 17057
www.icepts.com
717-704-1000
info@icepts.com

100% Employee Owned