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Your Hosted Voice Advantage

Hosted communications ensures business continuity for Transport Medicine

ornge

Customer Profile

Ornge operates one of the largest air and land medical transport systems in North America. Serving more than 12.5 million Ontarians within an area of approximately one million square kilometres, Ornge conducts approximately 18,000 medical transports annually. More than seventy percent of transports are from one hospital to another facilitating the design of the medical system around centres of excellence (which involves the designation of certain hospitals as responsible for certain medical disciplines for a given region). With access to more than 50 aircraft stationed at more than 20 bases across Ontario, ten of which are staffed 24/7, Ornge operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Ornge also operates a critical care interfacility land transport program in Ottawa, Peterborough and Toronto. As a result, in 2007 Ornge became the only Canadian transport medicine provider to earn accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems in all three modes of transport – helicopters, fixed wing aircraft and land ambulances.

Ornge is a world leader in transport medicine providing the residents of Ontario greater access to its medical system and the highest possible level of care while transporting patients outside of a traditional hospital.

Ontario's air medical transportation program began in 1977 with a single rotor-wing aircraft based in Toronto. In July 2005, the Ministry of Health appointed one organization to co-ordinate all aspects of the growing air medical transport system. In 2006 the company changed its name to Ornge (www.ornge.ca) and they now have access to more than 80 aircraft and 11 helicopters stationed at over 22 bases across Ontario. With 10 of its bases operating 24-7, Ornge operates one of the largest and most sophisticated aero-medical transport programs in North America. In addition, Ornge co-ordinates the surface transportation of critically ill patients between hospitals in Ontario and screens all patients moving between hospitals to ensure medical professionals are informed of patients who might have contagious respiratory illnesses.

Calls from across Ontario to the Ornge Communication Centre (OCC) in Toronto are often urgent and can be a matter of life and death. *"For some health care professionals calling our OCC to arrange transport for a patient is the most efficient way to ensure access to specialized care when needed,"* says Alan Stephens, OCC Director. *"For the sake of our callers, we can't afford to have our telecom system down,"* he added.

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Background

Hospitals and nursing station staff in remote areas and 911 operators call the Ornge Communications Centre between 800 and 1,000 times a day concerning patient transport situations. Ornge receives approximately 26,000 patient transport requests each year and conducts about 18,000 transfers.

While telecom systems and networks are reliable, outages and communication failures can and do occur. To keep calls humming if telecom systems fail or if call centre staff have to vacate the OCC, Ornge has a back-up system of analogue and mobile phones. However, getting the Ornge Telco to transfer incoming calls to analogue or mobile phones takes time – anywhere from 10 minutes to almost an hour. In addition, any active calls would be dropped if the Telco had to redirect incoming calls.

Looking for a more effective and efficient way to recover from a disaster, Ornge set out to find a system that would ensure full and immediate business continuity.

"*To avoid the negative and potentially life-threatening consequences of telecom failure, we needed in place a Business Continuity Plan that would ensure all calls got through no matter what,*" said Tom Lepine, Ornge's Chief Operating Officer.

The Solution

To implement its Business Continuity Plan, Ornge selected a Voice Assurance Suite application, CALL ALLOCATOR, from Aizan Technologies Inc., North America's leading provider of hosted voice and messaging communication services. CALL ALLOCATOR provides precise call routing and real-time load balancing of all inbound calls across multiple contact centres or to designated phone numbers.

> *"Anyone who operates a call centre should have CALL ALLOCATOR. There really is nothing else like it"*
> says Ze-ev Ionis, Business Architecture Reengineering Program Manager

If Ornge experiences a telecom outage or if staff have to vacate the OCC, CALL ALLOCATOR automatically and immediately redirects calls to designated fail safe numbers that Ornge establishes. Call routing occurs in real time without service disruptions. In other words, there are no dropped calls – active calls are not lost and incoming calls are redirected. Business continuity is assured by an automatic call routing process that is seamless to callers.

In addition, the phone numbers used for business continuity purposes can be changed in real time with the click of a mouse using a secure web site control panel, so calls can be redirected to other numbers should circumstance require.

"*Anyone who operates a call centre should have CALL ALLOCATOR. There really is nothing else like it,*" says Ze'ev Ionis, Business Architecture Reengineering Program Manager for Ornge and the person responsible for implementing the Business Continuity Plan.

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Unexpected Benefits

The use of CALL ALLOCATOR for disaster recovery has led to some unexpected benefits – beyond business continuity – for Ornge.

When Ornge had to do some OCC construction work, it set up temporary facilities for call centre agents. Using the CALL ALLOCATOR web control panel, all incoming calls were directed to phones in the temporary facilities. When the agents returned to the reconfigured OCC, calls were redirected to their permanent stations with the click of a mouse. "*All of that would have been a much more onerous task if we had to do it through our telecom provider*," says Ionis.

Based on incoming phone numbers Ornge also uses CALL ALLOCATOR to automatically route calls from each of its four regions in Ontario to call centre agents responsible for designated regions.

Using CALL ALLOCATOR, incoming calls can be balanced according to a variety of business rules, such as available agent resources (including skill levels and language criteria), overall call volume, time of day or day of week or other business criteria. For instance, if calls from one region were to overload agents, CALL ALLOCATOR's load balancing system could be used to automatically shift calls to available agents or to other call centre locations.

> *"We have a performance agreement with the province of Ontario and Aizan's CALL ALLOCATOR helps us fulfill our agreement"* says Tom Lepine, Ornge's Chief Operating Officer.

In Conclusion

"*We have a performance agreement with the province of Ontario and Aizan's CALL ALLOCATOR helps us fulfill our agreement*," says Tom Lepine. "*More importantly, it gives our callers – health care providers and emergency services across this vast province – the assurance that we will always be there to take their urgent calls.*"

Fully hosted, secured, supported and maintained by Aizan, CALL ALLOCATOR is not affected by issues that could have a negative impact on call delivery. As a hosted solution, CALL ALLOCATOR eliminates the cost of additional telecom servers, equipment and lines. With no investment in hardware, software or maintenance, CALL ALLOCATOR can be immediately integrated into existing telecom systems. Through the web-based control panel, all call routing and load balancing operates under the direct control of the end user.

CALL ALLOCATOR is part of the Aizan Voice Assurance Suite or hosted communication applications, which also includes AUTOMATED VIRTUAL ATTENDANT (AVA), Enhanced Messaging Application (EMA), INFOLINE, Keep Originator On Line (KOOL), Virtual Contact Center (VCC) and Virtual Fax Manager (VFM).

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