



A leading East Coast CPA firm counts on the reliability, efficiency, and advanced features of Avaya IP Office

Challenge

Fuoco Group's existing phone system had caused prolonged periods of downtime, inefficient functionality, and a host of other problems. The firm needed a reliable communications platform that could provide them with advanced features to help increase productivity, draw their 3-office company closer together, and help them provide world-class client service.

Solution

Avaya IP Office; VoiceMail Pro; Phone Manager Pro; Mobile Twinning (simultaneous delivery to office phone and cell phone); Softconsole; Avaya 5410 and 5420 digital phones; Avaya 5610 IP phones; a selection of wireless, Bluetooth, and noise-cancelling headsets.

Value Created

- Time savings resulting in greater productivity and more billable time for the firm
- Cost efficiencies
- System reliability
- Customer satisfaction
- User satisfaction
- Lower maintenance costs
- Scalability
- Investment protection

HAUPPAUGE, New York – Fuoco Group LLP is an accounting and business consulting firm with offices in New York City and Hauppauge, New York, and North Palm Beach, Florida. For the 70 CPAs and support staff, effective communications is critical to delivering client services, maximizing productivity, and driving revenue.

Joseph P. Manzelli Jr., CPA, CITP, is a partner at Fuoco Group LLP who serves as the firm's Director of Operations and oversees the firm's IT initiatives. In early 2008 his vision was to establish a robust IP telecommunications infrastructure that could meet all the firm's current needs and grow with them for many years to come.

Fuoco Group first installed a Cisco call management system, but after several months the installation did not meet the firm's expectations.

According to Manzelli, the firm's most urgent need was for an effective conferencing system that could be activated quickly and easily. Beyond that, they were also looking to benefit from all the features that they knew should be available and working well on an IP platform—everything from 3- or 4-digit dialing between all the offices and effective voicemail to mobility options and call control from the PC.

"Reliability is an extremely important consideration for the Fuoco Group," Manzelli said, *"We had suffered through days and weeks at a time with our systems down, when*

everyone had to do business on their personal cell phones. We never want to experience anything like it again.”

A solution with features that work intuitively and save time

Manzelli turned to an Avaya Authorized BusinessPartner that had previously provided some other IT services. After an extensive analysis of Fuoco Group’s needs, the Avaya Authorized BusinessPartner recommended a solution based on Avaya IP Office, with its extensive suite of applications and related devices. Planning sessions were held to ensure that Fuoco Group would have exactly the applications and equipment they needed and that the installation could be done quickly, so as not to interrupt the work of the three offices. Onsite prep work was done beforehand, so that the actual system changeover would be seamless.

Speed of deployment: “When we switched over to Avaya IP Office,” Manzelli said, “everything was brought in, plugged in, and installed—and within a day the Avaya

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system was up and running. We didn’t miss a beat. I think that’s a tremendous achievement on the part of the Avaya Authorized BusinessPartner. It’s such a relief to have a great system AND the technicians who really know how to make it work properly.” Additionally, Lou Fuoco, Managing Director of Fuoco Group asked, “How can this system be up and running in a day when our previous system took weeks?”

The solution supplied for each Fuoco Group location consisted of Avaya IP Office; VoiceMail Pro; Phone Manager Pro; Mobile Twinning (simultaneous delivery to office phone and cell phone); Softconsole; Avaya 5410 and 5420 digital phones; Avaya 5610 IP phones; a selection of wireless, Bluetooth, and noise-cancelling headsets; plus appropriate licensing and adjunct equipment.

IP Office 500 is a modular system that combines the reliability and ease of a traditional telephony system with the applications and advantages of an IP communications solution. It supports single locations and multi-site networks, multi-point conferencing, mobility, customer service, and many other capabilities that can keep pace with the firm’s evolution and growth. “We were extremely pleased to see the range of functionality that could be achieved with a system that is well priced for the small business,” Manzelli stated.

Ease of use: Each of the system components was carefully selected to meet the needs of Fuoco Group’s three offices. Their receptionists work with Avaya Softconsole, which is a PC-based operator console that enables operators to answer, route, and manage incoming calls from their PC screen. Softconsole users can view

caller information, directory information, calls on hold, company-side phone status, call history, and missed calls. It has worked so well for Fuoco Group that they are considering consolidating all call answering at one site, which will free up other personnel for dedicated work in different areas and possibly enable them to streamline their staff.

Avaya 5400 Series Digital Telephones work with IP Office to bring exceptional ease of use for both basic and advanced calling features. These phones offer one-touch functions, providing efficiency and speed in setting up conference calls, transferring calls, and dialing clients. The large LED display labels feature buttons automatically, so there is no need for paper labels. “This ease of use is so much better than what we had before,” Manzelli commented. “The commands and functions are all right there, and it all makes sense. The end users don’t need to know how to program the phone. The intuitive functionality is ready for them to use. As a result, there is less frustration and time wasted.”

Users have also found the teleconferencing feature of IP Office easy to set up and use, even for participants in several locations, both domestic and international. The caller ID function has been instrumental in enabling staff members to prioritize their time by recognizing which calls must be taken immediately and which ones can be postponed until later. Many staff members also use wired or wireless headsets, which contribute additional speed and ease to their communications.

Enhanced connectivity: Three-digit dialing among all three offices has really brought the different locations together, contributing

to a stronger sense of being one company, not three. *“It’s great when you’re talking to someone in the Florida office and it seems like that person is just down the hall,”* Manzelli said.

The firm is also using VoiceMail Pro, which can provide information to callers and assist the operator during periods of heavy call activity with a powerful voice processing system. This application also enables the integration of voicemail messages into a user’s email box. As the firm evolves in its use of the system, a number of enhanced messaging and call handling options can be activated.

Manzelli is personally trialing the application known as Phone Manager Pro, which offers control of the telephone from the user’s PC (headset required). He plans to roll out these features more widely to the rest of the firm in the near future. He also plans to integrate their customer data base so that screen pops with client information will be available.

Productivity gains: Manzelli commented, *“When you look at all the small time savings that result whenever a feature such as speed dialing, caller ID, or conference calling is used, it adds up to a significant amount, and this translates into a great increase in productivity across the entire firm. I believe that increase is almost doubled when you move your calling functions to the PC with Phone Manager Pro. I get the equivalent of about 2 or 3 days a month—which is about 10% or more—in time that I gain through the efficiency that our Avaya solution brings to us.”*

Mobility and home office options offer additional flexibility

Most of the CPAs currently use IP Office’s **mobility features** to stay connected any time, anywhere. These capabilities enable a call to ring simultaneously at the desk phone and on the cell phone. With this option, users do not have to give out their personal cell numbers, yet they need not miss any calls that come into their office. If a user forgets to turn on the Mobile Twinning feature, he or she can call the receptionist and the function can be turned on or off at the receptionist’s console.

Similarly, the IP phones that are used for home offices can conveniently be accessed by the same office number, plus they have the full functionality of the office phone system. Ron Winkler, a senior partner at Fuoco Group, was amazed how simple the IP phones are to use. *“I just had to plug in the phone, and within two minutes the phone had configured itself. Then I could make direct calls to the office simply by dialing extension numbers.”*

“It’s an extraordinary thing to be reachable at any location—your office, home, or traveling—on just one number,” Manzelli stated. *“What it means is that people don’t have to make lots of calls to find you. In the workplace today, sometimes you need to be available 24/7, and this approach accommodates that perfectly. At other times you need some privacy, and that option is available, too.”*

“I believe that our Avaya communications solution is the best investment our firm has ever made... Even our most demanding users are happy with it, and as the IT director, I have a high level of confidence in its performance. Right now it is saving us money and delivering exactly what we need, and it has the capacity to keep pace with any new applications that we will require for many years to come.”

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System reliability contributes to customer satisfaction and cost savings

Manzelli still recalls the days when the firm’s previous telephone system would go down, and he’s delighted that there has been virtually no downtime with Office IP.

“The loss in billable time is staggering when phone service goes down,” he explained. *“At one point we calculated that we might lose as much as \$7,000 per hour in lost productivity, and that’s just not acceptable. Now we have no worries about that occurring.”*

“When you look at all the small time savings that result whenever one of the many features such as speed dialing, caller ID, or conference calling is used, it adds up to a significant amount, and this translates into a great increase in productivity... I get the equivalent of about 2 or 3 days a month—which is about 10% or more—in time that I gain through the efficiency that our Avaya solution brings to us.”

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There is also no worry about customers not being able to get through on the phone, or of offering them less than state-of-the-art services such as conferencing, voicemail, and other features. “We need the best for our customers, and with the Avaya system, I’d say we have it. We’re a service business, which means we are dependent on people being able to reach us. If that doesn’t exist, we might as well close our doors.”

Manzelli is also pleased that the company will be saving money on the high service fees and line charges associated with its previous phone systems. He likes the Avaya maintenance agreement because it covers the applications, the hardware, and the devices.

“The best investment our firm has ever made...”

Manzelli concluded, “I believe that our Avaya communications solution is the best

investment our firm has ever made. It’s done everything we’ve asked it to do, and we know that there are many more features that we can move into as our use of the system evolves. Even our most demanding users are happy with it, and as the IT director, I have a high level of confidence in its performance. Right now it is saving us money and delivering exactly what we need, and it has the capacity to keep pace with any new applications that we will require for many years to come.”

Learn More

For more information on how Avaya Intelligent Communications can take your enterprise from where it is to where it needs to be, contact your Avaya Client Executive or a member of the Avaya Authorized BusinessPartner program, or visit “Do Your Research” at www.avaya.com.

APPLICATIONS, SYSTEMS, AND SERVICES

- IP Office 500
- 5420 Digital Phones
- 5410 Digital Phones
- 5610 IP Phones
- VoiceMail Pro
- Phone Manager Pro
- Mobile Twinning
- Softconsole
- VPN licenses for IP Phones
- AWH-75N Wireless Headsets
- ABT-35S Bluetooth Headsets
- Avaya Premier Services Agreement

All statements in this Case Study were made by Joseph P. Manzelli Jr., CPA, CITP, Partner and Director of Operations, Fuoco Group LLP.

ABOUT FUOCO GROUP LLP

The Fuoco Group has grown rapidly to become one of the leading accounting and consulting organizations in the Northeast United States. Headquartered on Long Island, with offices in New York City and North Palm Beach, FL, the Fuoco Group provides services ranging from core accounting to in-depth advisory and consulting for businesses and individuals. The Fuoco Group helps companies identify opportunities and deflect threats that could affect profitability, while developing sound strategies for growth. One of its specialties is leveraging technology to streamline its own operations and provide clients with the latest thinking on accounting software and systems.

ABOUT AVAYA

Avaya is a global leader in enterprise communications systems. The company provides unified communications, contact centers, and related services directly and through its channel partners to leading businesses and organizations around the world. Enterprises of all sizes depend on Avaya for state-of-the-art communications that improve efficiency, collaboration, customer service and competitiveness.

For more information please visit www.avaya.com.