CloudCAller.io and New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions

Modernizing Appeal Hearing Conferencing to Work 100% Remotely

Case Study: A High-End Softphone Communications Solution for the State of New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions

Background

The State of New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) is considered an innovator among state labor agencies managing Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims. A key part of this management process is holding administrative hearings, by Administrative Law Judges (ALJ), through conference calls as necessary when claim decisions are challenged by either the employer or claimant. These hearings must be recorded and maintained for up to 10 years. Making sure that conference call administrative hearings are managed in the most efficient and secure manner was a key element in the Agency's roadmap for continued modernization of its IT infrastructure. Additionally, being able to tie the recording directly to the Unemployment Insurance Tax & Claims systems case folder was considered ideal.

The Challenge

Obsolete technology and growing demand of business processes were causing ever increasing costs in maintaining the NMDWS's existing on-premises communication infrastructure. With that in mind, switching to a cloud-based scalable enterprise softphone application with current communication technology was the logical way to go.

The NMDWS, in partnership with Deloitte Consulting, designed and customized their Salesforce CRM application with a cloud-based softphone solution that easily integrated with their platform.

The NMDWS established a list of requirements for the softphone solution to tackle the needs for managing the ALJ's Unemployment Insurance administrative hearings:

- All the hearings should be conducted through softphone conference calls
- Each conference call lasts an average of one hour, and an average of 10 individuals participated in each conference call
- All conference calls must be recorded
- Audio recordings should be kept in a highly secured environment
- The solution should have API capability to allow downloading the recording to an on-premises server
- The hearing participants must not be burdened with anything other than a check-in number to call and providing a phone number for the ALJ to contact them at the scheduled hearing time
- ALJs must be able to individually manage calls with mute, hold, and disconnect capabilities
- The softphone needs to be flexible and user friendly, and at the same time it must permit the application Administrators to make certain functions mandatory in placing conference calls to eliminate potential calling errors

The next step in the implementation plan was for the NMDWS and Deloitte to conduct the evaluation of various cloud-based softphone solutions.

The Solution

After conducting several rounds of evaluations based on criteria including product features, initial and operational costs, and information security, Software Next Door's softphone solution – CloudCaller.io – scored highest among all products evaluated. The NMDWS decided to leverage its existing implementation of Salesforce.com CRM and replace the NMDWS's existing communications infrastructure with a high quality softphone solution tightly coupled with the Agency's Salesforce CRM. The replacement softphone communication system has strong conference call capability to support Unemployment Insurance administrative hearings, and enables recording, storing and retrieving records of the conference calls within Salesforce, with effective integration back into the Unemployment Insurance Tax & Claims systems.

The NMDWS's IT team and Software Next Door engineers worked together to solve network related issues during the implementation of the solution. Software Next Door, with support as needed from time to time from Twilio, the communication platform provider used exclusively by CloudCaller.io, showed great response time and capabilities for technical support related problems.

The Results

Collaboration between the NMDWS, Deloitte Consulting, and Software Next Door started during the evaluation process. Software Next Door understood the need to offer a flexible cost effective solution tailored to the needs of the Agency.

Software Next Door was able to quickly implement custom functionality for the interoperability between the softphone solution for holding the administrative hearing conference calls and the NMDWS's Salesforce CRM application. The final outcome led to a comprehensive, scalable, secure solution for the Agency's telecommunication needs which provided for cost savings.

Staff reported the following user-experience improvements, as part of post go-live staff survey:

- Reduced clutter and easy access to the softphone. Staff liked accessing softphone online while working with other computer programs rather than having to manage a desk phone and a computer system
- Added features and functionality, like ability to add unlimited number of participants in a single conference call, make facilitating and managing conference calls easier for the staff
- Significantly improved sound quality and better service to the hearing attendees
- Easy access to Administrative Hearing recordings
- Storing and presenting all case information including administrative hearing recordings in one place makes case orientation for the appellate staff easily manageable

" We were quite impressed by Software Next Door and their CloudCaller.io softphone application. Software Next Door understood our environment and vision, responded to our requirements, provided what we needed and then some within agreed upon budgets, and were always there when we needed their assistance. Their softphone application, CloudCaller.io provided a highly effective, user friendly conference capability, with secure access to, storing, and retrieval of the administrative conference call hearing information. Their partnership with Twilio delivered a network offering high quality and secure communications at an attractive cost which fit into our budget. "

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