

Phone.com Success Story

A Platform Fit for a Phone Company



A leader in cloud-based phone services for small businesses, Phone.com was using its own technology to handle inbound calls. But the system lacked key tools and required the constant attention of the company's engineers. Five9 eliminated these issues—and gave Phone.com newfound social skills to boot.



Company Profile

Phone.com initially built a customized contact center, which needed its own engineering staff to keep it running. With Five9, the company now has more tools, better reporting, and casts a much wider social media net than before.

- Approximately 25 agents in two locations
- Operates inbound calls and social media
- Handles 10,000 to 15,000 calls monthly

Industry

Business telecommunications

Website

www.phone.com

Challenges

- Tedious reporting tools
- Overburdened engineering staff
- Poor user interface
- Lack of backup phone system
- Unable to monitor agent productivity

Solution

- Blended solution from Five9
- Social media monitoring from Five9 Social
- Fast, easy-to-use reporting tools
- Improved agent accountability
- Call recording for agent training

Company Background

Newark, New Jersey-based Phone.com® is a cloud-based phone company that provides economical, flexible phone services for entrepreneurs, home offices, small businesses, and individuals. Using advanced Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technology, the company's basic plan can be tailored to meet customers' needs at home, in the office, and on the go from a variety of devices—keeping users connected with the people that matter most.

According to Jeremy Watkin, Phone.com's director of customer service, the company's "sweet spot" is the small home office customer who needs a local phone number and one or two extensions. For a low monthly fee, Phone.com provides these clients with a business phone line with a menu system and professional greeting. In addition, the company has a growing number of large customers, and also provides international phone numbers for companies with operations overseas.

Pushing the Limits of a Self-Built Platform

Phone.com's contact center operations are split between Poway, California and their company headquarters in Newark, New Jersey. All agents primarily handle inbound calls, and some agents in California also manage the company's social media duties.

Instead of buying technology from a third party, Phone.com initially built its own call center platform. "It worked," says Watkin, "and it was customized for what we wanted to do. But there were definitely challenges."

For example, the system had a poor user interface, which made it difficult to run reports on call activities. If he wanted to find out how many inbound calls were abandoned before a caller spoke to an agent, Watkin had to query an SQL database himself—or find an engineer to create a custom report for him. In fact, over time, Phone.com engineers began spending a large portion of their time maintaining the call center—taking away valuable resources from development processes that were core to the business.

Getting to Know Five9 Socially

Deciding that it needed a more robust platform, Phone.com began evaluating different providers. Watkin spoke to five or six companies before a business associate recommended Five9.

When he spoke to a Five9 sales representative, Watkin liked the fact that the rep wasn't pushy and didn't badmouth competitors like other companies did. "He just wanted to find out what we needed and whether Five9 could help," he said. "It felt more authentic."

But before implementing the Five9 contact center platform, Phone.com began using Five9 Social, a solution that tracks mentions on various social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and others, and allows companies to respond quickly to negative messages online. Phone.com was already using another social media

tool, but found that Five9 tracked many more sources, including blogs and online review sites, and was better suited for social customer care.

“Because social media is such a public channel, being responsive is critical,” said Watkin. “We can’t afford to have even one negative post go viral. Five9 Social enables us to find those comments, handle them on a more private channel, make those customers happy, and—in many cases—turn them into positive posts.”

Added Watkin, “With Five9 Social, we’re definitely not missing anything, which allows us to better control how people view our brand.”

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Jeremy Watkin
Director of Customer Service,
Phone.com

Get More Information
Call 800.553.8159 or visit
www.Five9.com

Instant Insight with Easier-To-Use Reporting

After its positive experience with Five9 Social, Phone.com implemented a Five9 cloud call center solution in June of 2014. The difference was obvious, Watkin said. Gone were the database queries—call volume, service level, and abandonment rate reports could now be created and sent instantly using the Five9 Supervisor Dashboard, with call data broken down by the hour or half hour.

“With Five9, we were able to see the productivity of our agents right away,” he said. “We could see how much time they were spending on calls compared to breaks and off-call tasks, which allowed us to manage our remote agents much better.”

Watkin also liked the Five9 user interface, which made it easier for supervisors to stay on top of calling queues and abandonment rates in real time over the Internet. “It’s been extremely easy to manage our agents because it’s all laid out very nicely in Five9.”

New Training and Accountability Tools

According to Watkin, better reporting means better agents. By having instant insights into agent behavior and results, supervisors can better understand how to manage their agents, ultimately increasing productivity.

The call recording capabilities of Five9 help too, especially when providing feedback to agents, Watkin said. Phone.com’s old system could record calls, but they would get lost in the company’s database. “It’s much more convenient than what we had before,” said Watkin.

Unexpected Benefits From the Cloud

Since its services and calling platform are now on separate platforms—thanks to Five9 and the cloud—Phone.com’s operations are now better protected. If a service interruption occurs, customers can still reach Phone.com agents. And there have been other benefits, too—some unexpected.

For example, Five9 enabled Phone.com to use interactive voice response (IVR) technology, and even helped agents set up messages. Adding seats has been easy with Five9, as well. “That was one more thing our engineers had to do before, so it’s a huge relief,” Watkin said.

Phone.com agents in particular like the platform’s Queue Callback Routing feature, which gives customers the ability to receive a callback instead of being placed on hold. “It’s a better customer experience, so it’s a better agent experience,” Watkin said. “Agents prefer interacting with customers who haven’t been waiting on hold for an extended period.”

Poised for Greater Results

According to Watkin, Phone.com is just beginning to leverage the power of Five9. Using its API integration capabilities, the company plans to integrate Five9 Social and its custom-built CRM platform with the contact center platform and begin using all three pieces to increase sales conversion rates. Because Five9 can be easily integrated into third-party applications, Phone.com also plans to provide agents with more details about each caller as calls come in, which will make them more productive, Watkin said.

Watkin said he has learned a lot by working with Five9—but perhaps the biggest lesson is that sometimes, you’re better off not building it yourself.

“There are so many reasons,” he says. “We don’t have to manage a bunch of servers on our end. We don’t have to hire more engineers. For us, it made sense to work with a company that does what they do best, and that was Five9.”

