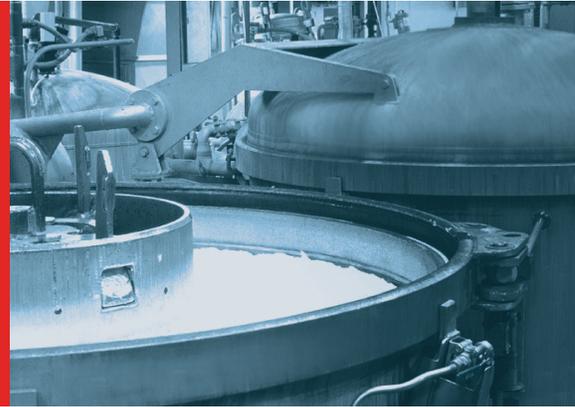


Century-Old Manufacturer Stays Agile and Responsive with 8x8

Barnhardt Manufacturing Company—Cotton Industry Powerhouse



In 1914 Barnhardt Manufacturing revolutionized the furniture industry with its invention of processing cotton for use in the creation of rayon fibers. Headquartered on the original site where it was founded in 1900, the business remains privately held by fourth-generation Barnhardt family members. The company currently operates eight manufacturing facilities across the United States, producing bleached cotton fiber products for industries spanning from medical and beauty to home care and consumer products.

A constant factor in Barnhardt's storied, century-plus history has been the continual utilization of the latest technologies and techniques to keep the company ahead of its competition and at the leading-edge of its industry. Seeking yet another innovative transformation in its workplace, Barnhardt Manufacturing began the search for a unified communications platform with the capabilities and security to impact the performance of employees across all of its operations.

Pulling Everyone Together

Kevin O'Rourke, CIO for Barnhardt Manufacturing, described his motivations, "Having a reliable communications system that could bring our team together in a more cohesive manner became an imperative for us. We have employees in offices, in our manufacturing facilities, and many needing mobile options in locations with very little cell service."

Ted Palmer, Barnhardt's manager of IT infrastructure, concurred, "We have some employees positioned in very rural areas—really off the beaten path—and we needed a solution that was simple and capable of being fully functional in a wide range of operating environments."

With over 300 telephone extensions, and facilities open 24 /7, coordination and communication across the company are vital to its success. "Our locations on the East Coast have to be in sync with our West Coast operations, which in turn, have to be able to communicate with our sales people in every time zone," said O'Rourke.

BARNHARDT
MANUFACTURING COMPANY

Customer: Barnhardt Manufacturing Company

Industry: Manufacturing

Location: Charlotte, NC

8x8 Products: 8x8 Virtual Office

Favorite 8x8 Features: Breadth of functionality, analytics, ability to utilize phone, smartphone, tablet, or desktop from any location

Primary Reason for Choosing 8x8: Completeness of solution

Number of Lines: 775

Previous Phone System: Mitel

Website: www.barnhardt.net

Legacy Limitations

With its legacy telephony system, the company had struggled with general maintenance and frequent capacity issues. Delane Heath, Barnhardt's network support specialist, noted, "Our old, decentralized system had a failure rate that was unacceptable for our business. In addition, it was hard to make changes and we lacked any form of analytics to give us visibility into call patterns."

"The legacy system's complexity caused stability, capability, and reliability issues," commented Palmer. "We had scaling problems and the only ways to fix them were not cost effective."

In addition, after experiencing calls being hacked or hijacked multiple times, system security became an important consideration. "A call that was originated from an auto-dialer was able to navigate across the old phone system and make international calls at our expense. We only found out when we saw the bills with multiple hundred-dollar phone calls!" explained Palmer. "We were unable to lock things down to prevent this re-occurring and that's when we knew we had to make a switch."

Making the Cut

The Barnhardt team created a detailed set of requirements and used the criteria to compare a shortlist of the industry-recognized leading services. Palmer recounted, "We eliminated vendors that didn't offer a cloud-based solution and several more got cut because they lacked the functionality we needed. After narrowing down the list to four candidates, we conducted an in-depth side-by-side comparison, and decisively concluded that 8x8 was the best solution for Barnhardt."

Heath reflected, "While cost and analytics were major factors, 8x8 really stood out by being the only vendor capable of providing superior voice quality without needing an MPLS [multiprotocol label switching] network."

Immediate Positive Impact

Barnhardt opted to do a phased implementation, starting with smaller locations and moving to larger facilities as the team gained experience. "The initial deployment was fantastic; 8x8 had one of the best implementation teams I've ever worked with," recalled Heath. "The well-structured deployment processes gave me confidence that the system would deliver to expectations."

Palmer reported "User response was really positive from the outset of the rollout. The clarity and new features were received very enthusiastically."

Broad Benefits

The new system enabled work processes to improve dramatically, cutting down on response times. "Before, we were not able to execute change requests with any level of urgency," said Heath. "Now, the simplicity and speed with which we can respond are just light-years ahead of where they used to be."

Palmer added, "The analytics capability from 8x8 is a valuable tool for managing the business and has given us a lot of benefits. We're now able to profile communication patterns and look at queue lengths to make sure we're effectively handling customer calls. We also use the information for internal performance management and to verify that the loading on our agents is appropriate."

Barnhardt's 8x8 system is integrated with its Salesforce cloud-based customer relationship management database and connected to the company's Microsoft email application to provide widespread improvements in efficiency and accuracy.

The 8x8 mobile app provides Barnhardt employees with the ability to access all the capabilities of 8x8 Virtual Office from smartphones, tablets, and desktop devices. "Before, we did not have a corporate directory available to mobile users, so they had no way to easily look up other employees. Now that we have the 8x8 mobile app on our phones or desktops; we have everything at our fingertips," Palmer stated.

With hundreds of inbound and outbound calls each day, system security and reliability are both essential. "8x8 has invested heavily in security and compliance for its solutions and, except for scheduled maintenance, we haven't had any downtime with the system," enthused Heath.



8x8 ties everything together: *The seamlessness of the unified communications we now enjoy across the entire company has been a huge uplift for everyone.*

—**Kevin O'Rourke**, CIO, Barnhardt Manufacturing Company

Staying Ahead by Looking Ahead

O'Rourke reflected, "We're always looking for opportunities to utilize advanced technologies to give ourselves an edge and we select partners for their ability to contribute to this strategy. 8x8 is constantly innovating and launching solutions that exceed expectations, making it a great partner for us."

Many companies underestimate the value of an advanced phone system. "Some people dismiss it as just being a commodity but this is old-school thinking," mused O'Rourke. "You take away someone's phone and then you tell me how valuable it is to them; we'll see how long they survive! Selecting the right phone system is a strategic advantage."

He concluded, "8x8 ties everything together: The seamlessness of the unified communications we now enjoy across the entire company has been a huge uplift for everyone."

For more information, call **1.866.862.2811** or visit **8x8.com**

