8x8

Nonprofit Early Childhood Alliance gets more for less with 8x8

Based in Fort Wayne, Early Childhood Alliance (ECA) is a nonprofit organization that provides early education services to children across northern Indiana. Its services include parent engagement programs, direct early care, and education in two accredited learning centers. ECA also works with other local service organizations and the business community to respond to the needs of children and families.

The Challenge: Lack of feature choice and partial Teams integration

For nonprofit organizations, it's critical to control costs and spending, and old and disjointed communication systems can be a huge financial drain. That's why Early Childhood Alliance (ECA) originally moved to the cloud several years ago, ditching their basic Nortel PBX for a cloud solution with RingCentral.

"With our old Nortel system, it was a hassle to access voicemail because of all the key commands you had to memorize," says Nick Claypool, Director of IT at ECA. "So moving to cloud communication was a pretty significant shift for our users. They found the idea of taking business calls from a phone at their home, or from their mobile phone, revolutionary."

Although ECA stayed with RingCentral for a few years, the organization became frustrated with the vendor's pricing structure and feature set. A few key features, such as Caller ID and single sign-on, were not included in their pricing tier, nor were they available a la carte. On top of that, the company kept changing its approach to the collaboration experience, particularly around Glip integration. "It was a really confusing user experience," says Claypool, "and there was no way to turn off Glip or integrate a different solution." By then, ECA was using Microsoft 365 across the organization, including Microsoft Teams.

Industry
Nonprofit

Headquarters
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Website
ecalliance.org

8x8 Products
8x8 Work with Voice for Microsoft Teams

Primary reason for selecting 8x8
- Unhappy with RingCentral
- Plans that included key features
- Full MS Teams integration

Channel Partner
AeroCom

Highlight metrics
- 25% cost reduction
- Fewer systems for IT to maintain
- Fewer tools for users to learn

Claypool reached out to AeroCom, his long-time telecommunications solution provider, for help with sourcing a new solution. Together, they looked at three candidates: Jive, Nextiva, and 8x8. Of the three, 8x8 stood out as the top choice because of its top-tier integrations, features, and streamlined approach.

The Solution: One central hub for collaboration and calls

Making the move from one cloud solution to another was simple and straightforward. "Our transition from RingCentral to 8x8 was relatively painless," recalls Claypool. "It was far easier than moving from our old phone system because for the most part, we'd already made the mindset shift to a cloud user experience."

ECA deployed 8x8 Work and 8x8 Voice for Microsoft Teams. 8x8's integration with Teams enabled staff to make and receive calls from within the same company-wide collaboration hub. This type of simplified user experience aligns with Claypool's IT strategy: "As much as possible, I like to limit the number of different tools and software that people have to learn how to use." To help employees get up to speed, Claypool created a brief guide for new users and added it to the company's internal knowledge base.

"We were frustrated with RingCentral's pricing structure, lack of critical features, and confusing user experience. 8x8 offered everything we needed in one streamlined platform."

Nick Claypool, Director of IT

The Benefits: Less is more (in more ways than one)

Moving to 8x8 has helped ECA overcome some key business challenges. First of all, it reduces the number of software programs and vendors that Claypool has to manage, which saves him time and effort. Second, it reduces the number of software tools that employees have to remember how to use (which also cuts down on IT support requests).

The move has also helped ECA reduce costs by about 25%. Previously, the organization had received a special low nonprofit rate from RingCentral, but when its contract was renewed, the rate was no longer available and monthly costs almost doubled. Moving to 8x8 helped ECA save money and better control costs due to pricing that was per user, rather than per phone number, as well as access to a broader feature set.

Claypool sums it up: "I appreciate the fact that 8x8 offers licensing flexibility and includes important functionality like Caller ID and single sign-on for lower license editions, rather than charging extra for these business-essential features. That's a big thing—it really helps our nonprofit control costs."

Contact 8x8 sales or your 8x8 partner for additional information.
1 866 879 8647 or **+44(0)333 043 8888** or visit **8x8.com**.