TS Tech USA

Logicalis designs and implements an IP telephony system for TS Tech USA to meet the demands of its just-in-time manufacturing schedule.

TS Tech USA, a subsidiary of TS Tech Co. of Japan, is a manufacturer of automobile seats for a wide range of cars. More than 1,000 employees work at the Reynoldsburg, OH, facility.

A just-in-time manufacturer, TS Tech USA has to be able to produce completed seats on demand so its production systems and its workforce are in constant motion.

"Whatever we make in the morning will be in a vehicle in the evening," says Chief Engineer, MIS Section Manager Steve Friedman.

Flexible and dependable communication within the plant and between suppliers, as a result, is essential for meeting production schedules.

TS Tech USA's eight-person IT team maintains a zero tolerance for bottlenecks and supports a diverse and sophisticated array of accounting, manufacturing, pricing, billing and logistics systems to enable the relentless demand of the plant's production schedule.

TS Tech USA's legacy Nortel PBX phone system, however, literally tied phone communications at the facility to a single line for every phone number and kept the IT team busy chasing after an extremely mobile workforce re-wiring phone lines for every new location. TS Tech USA needed a phone system that could accommodate moves, adds and changes as smoothly as its manufacturing system produced car seats.

Just-in-time IPT

A long-term Logicalis customer (Logicalis provides TS Tech USA with all its server, storage and VMware needs), Friedman turned to Logicalis to design a just-in-time IP telephony system that would meet the demands of the company's just-in-time manufacturing schedule.

Logicalis Account Exec Mary Noschese—who has sold technology solutions to Friedman for more than three years—developed a compelling total cost of ownership report for a Cisco Unified Communications system to replace the legacy Nortel PBX system.

Working closely with Friedman, Logicalis Solution Architect Ken Craft developed a solution that replaced the legacy Nortel infrastructure throughout the facility with high-availability clusters for call control and voice messaging. Dial connectivity was also configured to facilitate five-digit dialing between the TS Tech USA plant and eight other sites.

Among other challenges, the design was able to accommodate the sharing of phones by end users who worked on different shifts in the same location. The complete design involved rack-mounted Cisco UCS servers, Cisco switches, voice gateways and IP phones.

Total Solution

Logicalis handled the design, project management and implementation of the new system, as well as managed services for day two and ongoing support.

"They did it all," says Friedman. "There were some long days, but it all went very smoothly."

To avoid impacting the plant's production schedule, installation was completed during the course of a single weekend. Friedman notes that Logicalis Delivery Engineer Chris Ronse exceled at addressing the inevitable issues that came up while implementing and configuring 170 individual new IP phones—many of which had to be set up with multiple voicemail boxes for as many as four different users.

Logicalis also worked with Friedman's team to train selected groups of users from each shift and each area within the plant who were then able to train their co-workers.

Now when an end user moves to a new location, all he or she has to do is carry the phone over and plug it in—which makes Friedman and his team happy. End users are happy because their phones are now as mobile as they are.

Friedman says TS Tech USA's IT team and end users are now expanding into the capabilities of the new phone system. Friedman says he often uses the WebEx Meet-Me conferencing system to quickly set up ad hoc conference calls without having to pay a third-party service. He also uses Jabber and Cisco Communicator to allow him to use his laptop as his IP phone wherever he is in the plant.

Broad Infrastructure Skill Set

The IP telephony project was part of a rolling series of IT upgrades over the course of 60 days that called on Logicalis' broad set of skills across the IT infrastructure. In addition to the VoIP system, Logicalis implemented an EMC VNX SAN, installed VMware vCenter, installed new wireless access controllers and replaced all the Wi-Fi access points so end users can stay connected anywhere in the more than 200,000-square-foot factory. TS Tech USA subsequently upgraded Catalyst switches in its server room. Next up on the upgrade plan is a migration to Exchange 2010.

"We're confident that with Logicalis' help we now have a phone system and a network infrastructure that we can build on in the future," says Friedman. "We're growing into the capabilities that the new system makes possible. It's an ongoing process, and we know we can turn to Logicalis when we need to."

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> **Steve Friedman, TS Tech USA**