



CASE STUDY

MARKET: FINANCE

REGION: NORTH AMERICA

COMPANY: BANNER BANK

# BANNER BANK IMPROVES CUSTOMER SERVICE WITH NEW, GEOGRAPHICALLY REDUNDANT VOICE NETWORK

Speedier, more personal customer service and lower operating costs delivered by Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX™ Enterprise Communication Server



Headquartered in Walla Walla, Washington, Banner Bank is the oldest chartered commercial bank in Washington State, conducting business from 90 locations in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. Banner Bank is a community bank that offers a wide variety of commercial banking services and financial products to individuals and small and medium-sized businesses and their employees in its primary market area. With geographically dispersed operations and an outdated telecommunications infrastructure, the bank needed a new voice system to improve communications with customers and employees throughout its footprint.

## CHALLENGES

- Manage calls to all branches more efficiently
- Improve intra-company communications and productivity
- Reduce operating costs by improving voice system availability, reliability, and serviceability
- Enable crisis team visibility of an emergency in progress in real time

## SOLUTION

- Dramatically improved intra-company communications, employee productivity, and customer interactions with advanced IP telephony services at all locations enabled by the Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX™ Enterprise Communication Server, Alcatel-Lucent OmniTouch™ Contact Center Standard Edition, and unique Alcatel-Lucent least cost routing feature
- More efficient handling and cost-effective first time resolution of all customer calls provided by the Genesys™ Compact Edition contact center solution
- Real-time conferencing and collaboration with the Alcatel-Lucent OmniTouch™ 8660 My Teamwork™ Conferencing and Collaboration multimedia, multiparty business communications solution
- Customer service quality control with complete call tracking enabled by the Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX™ RECORD Suite
- High quality voice with Alcatel-Lucent IP Touch™ 4068 Extended Edition phones
- Efficient network monitoring and management with the Alcatel-Lucent OmniVista™ 8770 Network Management System
- Automatic detection of all outgoing emergency calls and call location with the Alcatel-Lucent Emergency Notification Server (ENS)



*The multiple, disparate and outdated voice systems in use by Banner Bank were no longer able to support the demands of a modern workforce and customer base.*

***New cost-saving and productivity technologies for intra-company and customer service interactions could not be integrated.***

## THE CHALLENGES

Banner Bank's services include personal and community banking, commercial banking, real estate lending, and construction and mortgage lending. Its highly decentralized, customer-oriented business relies on communication to support daily operations and customer service efforts. But an outdated collection of disparate voice networks and systems was making it difficult to deliver high quality customer service and was costly to operate and maintain.

The bank's telecommunications infrastructure was a collection of regional systems built with more than a dozen separate hardware platforms. These systems were controlled by an equal number of proprietary operating systems and interconnected with a complex and difficult to manage array of dissimilar telephones. The network was having trouble supporting existing applications, including voice messaging, contact center call management, and service moves, additions, and changes. As a result, employees were not able to effectively answer, transfer, and address customer calls, or consult with colleagues to ensure customers received the information they needed quickly. More importantly, customers were finding it

difficult to navigate the confusing menu options the network presented when they placed a call to their local branch to connect with a bank employee.

"Each of the regional offices had their own systems that operated as independent silos," said Jeff Reynolds, Assistant Vice-President, Telecom Engineer. "Voice mail systems and departmental dialing only worked well within a regional system. This meant that personnel in a region could communicate fairly easily with each other, but could not connect easily with the central office or branches in another region. If loan officers in one region wanted to connect with a marketing officer in another region they had to place a toll call. And, if a voice mail was left for an employee in one region, that employee could not forward that voice mail to another. Plus, when we had to update operating systems for these different areas, it would require a site visit to every location, which meant hundreds of hours, and considerable travel time."

## **Disparate systems no longer supported**

In addition to the day-to-day challenges associated with maintaining this infrastructure, these disparate systems

## BENEFITS

- 59 percent reduction in the cost of long distance calling within the first month of cutover to least cost routing with the new system
- Vast improvement in customer service provided by immediately connecting customers with the right employee at all times
- More efficient and productive operations enabled by call transfer, conferencing, and collaboration features
- Greater flexibility for employees required to operate from multiple locations
- Safer working environment enabled by E-911 support
- Increased system availability and drastically reduced repair times for outages
- Significantly improved management of call center performance

were no longer supported by the manufacturers and vendors. Plus, the infrastructure could no longer scale to meet future growth, which made it difficult for the bank to integrate new cost-saving, productivity, and customer service technologies.

After a rigorous selection process, which included a formal RFP, multiple technical reviews, on site visits and Banner Bank business unit feedback, Alcatel-Lucent scored the highest of the five vendors considered as suppliers of a new telecommunications infrastructure.

“We were looking for a world-class partner that understood the technology and customer service requirements we needed to address – a partner with the resources that would enable us to improve system availability to users, which in turn would allow us to improve service to our customers,” said Reynolds. “We wanted to deal with a supplier that could address the engineering challenges of the network we envisioned. Alcatel-Lucent was able to provide that level of expertise and that was very important to us.”



*“Alcatel-Lucent engineered a telecommunications infrastructure that has enabled us to improve communications between employees and with our customers. The new network has reduced the overall cost of management and maintenance. Plus we have seen immediate cost savings in long distance calling charges with the least cost routing feature, which reduced long distance costs by 59 percent in the first month of operation.”*

**Jeff Reynolds, Assistant Vice-President, Telecom Engineer IV, Banner Bank**

## THE SOLUTION

To address Banner Bank’s communications requirements, Alcatel-Lucent provided an integrated, geographically redundant communications infrastructure engineered for resiliency, high availability and cost-effective operations across all 105 Banner Bank locations.

Advanced business telephony features are provided by the Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX™ Enterprise Communication Server. Customer contact center functionality is enabled by the Alcatel-Lucent OmniTouch™ Contact Center Standard Edition. And call routing, e-mail routing, and agent connections can be managed from a single desktop with the Genesys™ Compact Edition all-in-one contact center solution.

These core systems are supported by

software-based multimedia, and multi-party call handling and management enabled by the Alcatel-Lucent OmniTouch™ 8660 My Teamwork™ Conferencing and Collaboration solution. Customer service quality control via call recording, detailed screen captures and contact center agent coaching is provided by the Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX™ RECORD Suite. And Internet-based voice calling between employees and between employees and customers is supported on the Alcatel-Lucent IP Touch™ 4068 Extended Edition full-featured desk phones and the Alcatel-Lucent OmniTouch™ 4135 IP Conferencing conference phone.

To address safety and security requirements, the new network is configured to provide real time, company-wide monitoring of all 911 calls placed from any desktop with the

*“The new system is modern and easy-to-use. Callers to any branch can always connect with a live agent, employees are able to manage and route calls based on specific needs, operations and maintenance costs are lower, and we can easily expand and upgrade the network to support changes in daily operations.”*

**Jeff Reynolds, Assistant Vice-President, Telecom Engineer IV, Banner Bank**



Alcatel-Lucent Emergency Notification Server (ENS). Security personnel and first responders use this feature to determine the nature of an emergency and action required. This improves emergency response efforts and virtually eliminates false 911 calls from any location.

Finally, the entire network can now be managed from a desktop with the Alcatel-Lucent OmniVista™ 8770 Network Management System. This modular network management platform provides centralized management of the Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX Enterprise and eliminates the need for costly site visits for moves, additions, changes and network updates.

## THE BENEFITS

“The Alcatel-Lucent solution replaced our outdated telecommunications infrastructure and provided all the functionality Banner Bank was looking for in a geographically redundant and resilient system,” said Reynolds. “It has

improved customer service by increasing contact center agent availability, reducing hold times and enabling agents to get customers the information they need quickly and efficiently. It has improved intra-company communications and productivity. And it has reduced the cost of operating and maintaining the system by enabling us to respond to maintenance and administrative requests – moves, adds, and changes – almost immediately, as opposed to having to schedule changes, and sometimes being anywhere from three to 15 days out on those requests.”

Reynolds added that the new infrastructure has also reduced costs by significantly reducing the number of carrier facilities required, and enabling a significant reduction in long distance expenses for inter- and intrastate communications traffic across all Banner Bank locations.

## CUSTOMER SUMMARY

Banner Bank

**MARKET:** FINANCE

**EMPLOYEES:** 1,500

**NUMBER OF AGENTS:** 61

**NUMBER OF CUSTOMER**

**INTERACTIONS:**

35,000-45,000/month

**URL:** [www.bannerbank.com](http://www.bannerbank.com)