

Evolve IP Gives Real Estate Investment Firm's Phone System an Extreme Makeover for an Impressive Return on Investment

GFI Capital cuts recurring cost of voice services by 35% with hosted IP phone solution from Evolve IP

GFI Capital Customer Profile

Location
HQ in
New York City

Industry
Real Estate
and Insurance
Services

Founded in 1983 and headquartered in New York City, GFI Capital Resources Group, Inc., through its affiliates, is a leading, diversified provider of comprehensive real estate and insurance services to clients throughout the U.S. Through an integrated platform of affiliates specializing in commercial real estate finance and sales, property management, insurance and real estate development, along with its hotel affiliate, GB Lodging, GFI is powered by strong relationships with major financial institutions, investors, and buyers and sellers of real estate.

An overview

GFI Capital has completely remodeled its enterprise-wide voice system, and in doing so, has cut the recurring cost of its voice services by 35% with a hosted IP phone solution from Evolve IP.

Business Situation

GFI Capital was steeped in high, recurring costs; inefficiencies with staffing and maintenance; and extreme frustration with its aging analog phone system. The existing system lacked modern features that improve productivity, support a mobile workforce, and enable business continuity in the event of a disaster.

Situation

GFI Capital, a New York City real estate and brokerage firm with nearly 20,000 properties under management, has completely remodeled its enterprise-wide voice system with impressive results.

However, it wasn't always a pretty sight. It's 'before' view showed a company steeped in high, recurring costs, inefficiencies with staffing and maintenance, and an undefinable level of frustration with its aging analog phone system. The old system also lacked modern features that improved productivity, supported a mobile workforce, and enabled business continuity in the event of a disaster. So, GFI Capital decided to replace the falling-down phones with Evolve IP's award-winning hosted IP phone system. What it received in return was way more than just curb appeal.

The Search for Beauty

GFI Capital carefully considered its decision to upgrade to a new phone system, recognizing the tremendous importance of having a reliable mouthpiece for its customers. "The phone is typically the

first point of contact for our customers so we needed the best," said Robert Ross, Chief Technology Officer of GFI Capital. "In addition, we have a geographically dispersed company with at least 10 to 12 percent on the road. It's critical that these employees can make calls, participate in conference calls and remote meetings from anywhere. This fact made it imperative to move to a cloud-based product that would have service everywhere."

Ross and his team evaluated seven phone system providers over the course of four months before locking in with Evolve IP. "Cloud-based systems like Evolve IP's will continue to evolve just like premise systems when it comes to features but the cloud's distributed model ensures that voice service is always available. What I found is that there are a lot of cloud-based providers out there, but some do it well and some don't – Evolve IP stands out above them all."

"Since switching to Evolve IP, we have cut the monthly operational recurring cost of voice services by about 35% as compared

Products

- Hosted IP Phone System
- Voicemail Scribe

Solution

GFI Capital evaluated seven phone system providers over the course of four months before deciding on Evolve IP's hosted IP phone system, which provided a significant cost saving and enables their geographically diverse company and employees who are on the road to stay connected from anywhere. Additionally, when they resell, there is no cost and little for them to do in order to transfer the system to the new property owner.

to our premise-based analog systems," said Ross. "This savings has made an immediate and resounding impact on the operational efficacy of each location that has converted."

According to Gartner, Evolve IP offers the industry's "best-of-breed" unified communications solution, including a hosted PBX phone system and advanced features like mobility, video, IM&P, unified messaging, high-definition voice, and more. This world-class solution is delivered as a cloud service but with the quality and control of on-site equipment. The solution's reputation for quality and innovation appealed to Ross when he began the search.

to fix; now it's just a simple call and the problem is handled immediately," said Ross.

• **Improved Mobility** – for the first time, GFI Capital's largely remote workforce enjoys reliable phone service from anywhere and can easily connect with customers or participate in meetings remotely.

• **Business Continuity** – Evolve IP provided disaster recovery consultation to help GFI Capital create a business continuity plan involving its phone system. Now, if there is a power outage or the internet goes down for any reason, GFI Capital will still be able to see calls as emails with Evolve IP's talk-to-text feature. "If there were a large-scale emergency like Hurricane Sandy, we can

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Robert Ross
Chief Technology Officer at GFI Capital

GFI Capital has experienced a number of material business benefits. Some of these include:

• **Significant Cost Savings** – with Evolve IP's award-winning cloud model, there's no heavy up-front capital investment in infrastructure, saving thousands of dollars – particularly important for GFI Capital with its short-lived property ownership. In addition, upgrades and troubleshooting is handled via the cloud in half the time as on premise, saving on ongoing maintenance costs. "It used to cost us upwards of \$200 a service call and take at least three days

now re-route calling remotely and react to disasters quickly – something we couldn't do with any premise-based service."

With Evolve IP, every GFI Capital office has guaranteed SLAs for reliability, and can rely on geographically disperse and redundant, active-active configurations for business continuity in the event of a failure or outage.

• **Streamlined Management** – GFI Capital wanted a way to streamline the management of its many different phone systems across a geographically disperse area, and they got it with Evolve IP. "I didn't want different urls, interfaces,

Benefits

- Flexible operations
- Significant cost savings
- Mobility enablement
- Business continuity
- Streamlined management of systems
- Faster, easier troubleshooting

and passwords to log in and manage each individual location. Only Evolve IP offered one, easy-to-use dashboard for management. Now I have a single pane of glass to manage the entire portfolio of phones, providing me with full visibility over all locations, saving me a ton of time and improving overall efficiency.”

• **Faster, Easier Troubleshooting** – in addition to providing fast response, Evolve IP has visibility downstream to

no additional cost.

“With Evolve IP, it’s really easy to transfer the service which is important for a company like ours that tries to resell quickly. There’s no cost to move a phone account over to the new property owner and it’s a great deal because they get new equipment and a reliable, high-quality voice solution. We win, too, because we no longer have to waste time or money decommissioning each phone system

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the network, to the voice gateway, to the switch, and all the way to the individual phones for trouble shooting. “This was huge,” noted Ross who had waited as long as five days to resolve a problem with an old system. “I’m no longer at the mercy of a third-party vendor.”

• **Flexible Operations** – as a cloud-based platform, Evolve IP’s voice solution is highly flexible, making it fast and easy to make configuration changes, add or remove users, and even transfer accounts to new owners like GFI Capital property buyers.

One part of GFI Capital’s business is identifying undervalued commercial properties, purchasing them and then making substantial investments in renovations for the purpose of selling these properties for a profit. The Evolve IP cloud-based phone system has been implemented in GFI Capital’s entire portfolio of such real estate properties and is proving to be an extra selling point for the new owner who inherits the system at

since the service is delivered via the cloud. There’s not much for us to do at all, which is perfect,” Ross added.

GFI Capital has also been enjoying many smart features included with the Evolve IP phone system. One of the most popular new features among GFI community and regional managers is Voicemail Scribe, Evolve IP’s voice-to-text application, which allows staff to see a voicemail message from any device, anywhere, without having to open and play the audio. But, for CTO Robert Ross, it’s Evolve IP’s unparalleled service that has turned him into a true Evolve IP advocate.

“Over the years, I’ve dealt with all types of external vendors and not one compares with Evolve IP. The service and support is fantastic. They have mastered just the right approach to developing long-term customer relationships. Our Evolve IP team has gone over and above to bring us on board, and I can’t say enough about all of them,” concluded Ross.

Data Centers



East Coast Locations
401 N Broad St. Philadelphia &
Wayne, PA



Midwest Locations
East and West Neo Parkway,
Cleveland, OH



South Midwest Location
Brasos Tech District
Austin, TX



West Coast Location
Super NAP
Las Vegas, NV

About Evolve IP:

Evolve IP is The Cloud Services Company™. Designed from the beginning to provide organizations with a unified option for cloud services, Evolve IP enables decision-makers to migrate all or select IT technologies to its award-winning cloud platform. Evolve IP's combination of security, stability, scalability and lower total cost of ownership is fundamentally superior to outdated legacy systems and other cloud offerings. Today, over 77,000 users across the globe depend daily on Evolve IP for cloud services like virtual servers, desktop services, disaster recovery, unified communications, contact centers and more.

Visit www.EvolveIP.net or <http://blog.EvolveIP.net>.

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