

More Value, Less Money

Teoma helps Detroit Community Health Connection get the most from its telecommunications systems.

There's no question that a robust, stable and feature-rich telecommunications system is vital to business operations. There are, however, a number of ways to achieve that goal. One way is to hire a team of engineers and technicians, bring in a group of consultants, and manage relationships with telecom service providers.

Detroit Community Health Connection decided it made a lot more sense to call Teoma Systems.

For more than six years, DCHC has relied on Teoma for its telecommunications needs. Teoma's expertise enabled the organization to fully outsource the maintenance of its telecommunications systems. It wasn't until recently, however, that the organization began taking full advantage of Teoma's capabilities.

While previous management had underutilized Teoma, Interim President and CEO Wayne Bradley Sr. quickly recognized Teoma's tremendous value — not only in providing ongoing support but in helping improve upon the organization's telecommunications systems to meet its business needs and goals.

"When I came on board in March 2006, one of the things I quickly dealt with was our telecommunications. I view telecommunications as one of the most essential parts of any business, and any leader must address it in terms of hardware, software, training and support," Bradley said. "The first thing I did was to put Lolita Wadley in charge of telecommunications and had her get in touch with Teoma Systems to help us determine what we had and what we needed to do to make things better."

Making It Work

Karl Watkins of Teoma met with DCHC and reviewed the organization's telecommunications equipment and its relationship with AT&T — a consultative process the organization hadn't taken advantage of in the past. He recommended that the system be upgraded to meet DCHC's aggressive new goals and assembled a team to implement the latest hardware and software. He also evaluated DCHC's AT&T bills and determined that the organization was not receiving optimum service.

"The folks within Teoma worked very closely with Lolita to do several upgrades as well as some modernization in our switch rooms in each of our five facilities," Bradley said. "They're also providing Lolita with training so that she can become the telecommunications expert within DCHC."

"Karl also uncovered that while we pay AT&T on time they don't necessarily complete repairs on time. Consequently we've had numerous problems that weren't caused by our equipment or Teoma's services but because of AT&T. Teoma has stepped in to help us improve that relationship."

Now, Teoma is helping DCHC take better advantage of the features inherent in its phone system. For example, Project Manager Nicole DeLeon and her team are revamping the organization's phone menu and setting up automated reports for management.

"Our principal business is providing healthcare services to the uninsured and the under-insured," Bradley said. "When you have a complicated phone menu that forces people to hold or leave a message or press a series of buttons, you're going to lose business. It was something that bothered me, and Teoma is helping us correct it."

"We have a new attitude here at DCHC. We know that technology helps us — it doesn't do our jobs for us but it certainly helps us communicate. And that underscores the importance of having a company like Teoma in place."

The Right Partner

DCHC had very specific ideas about what it wanted its phone system to do. Of primary importance was connecting patients to a person rather than a voicemail box. Wadley also wanted to be able to track incoming call activity.

"The system can tell us how many calls are coming in, how many are dropped, how long callers wait in queue and other helpful information," she said. "The phone system always had that capability, we just didn't have the knowledge."

While a less scrupulous firm might have tried to sell DCHC a new phone system, Teoma pointed out that the existing equipment could do everything the organization wanted and more.

"Teoma told me directly, 'Your system could have been doing that a long time ago. It just was never asked,'" Bradley said. "I daresay that had Teoma not been involved, I'd still be sitting here thinking that there ought to be a way to get the reports we need."

Wadley also appreciates the fact that Teoma handles everything — hardware and software implementation, configuration, troubleshooting and more.

"They are excellent at what they do. They have been a tremendous help for me and for the organization, and they get things done in a timely fashion. I love working with them," she said.

"It's great to have one telecommunications provider when they're doing the job right. And that's Teoma," Bradley said. "We have found them to be very responsive to our needs — if not same-day service, certainly next-day service, whatever the problem may be. I think that for the money we pay, we're getting every dollar's worth from Teoma."