

Armstrong Telephone Company Case Study

Introduction

BEC Technologies develops and markets integrated broadband networking equipment that enables independent telephone companies and internet service providers to deliver the next generation of broadband services. BEC's success is built on the development of strong relationships with high growth integrated internet access markets. One customer that is responding to strong vertical growth with the BEC ADSL modem product line is Armstrong Telephone Company. Armstrong owns and operates independent telephone companies in West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York. These companies provide local and long distance services, digital calling features, dial-up Internet and DSL service. We spoke to Shawn Hillard, the Director of Field Technical Support at Armstrong Telephone of Pennsylvania about his selection of BEC to support Armstrong's growth.

Key Challenges

Armstrong Telephone Company of Pennsylvania utilizes ADSL2+ technology for their DSL network. One of the issues affecting Armstrong Telephone's growth was that a large degree of their existing modems were exhibiting failures, especially during the electric storm season. "We also had problems with the units overheating and becoming so hot that the customers would feel they were a hazard with operating temperatures measured at 180 degrees on the modems surface", said Hillard. During that time, Armstrong had received and tested the 5200S single port ADSL2+ modem. Armstrong integrated it into their system and they were extremely pleased with its performance. That spurred an initial order of 300 units in the first month. To date, Armstrong continues to deploy a growing number of BEC modems. As their business requirements change and grow, Armstrong Telephone has started deploying BEC's 7300GT, a 4-port 10/100 modem with a built-in Wireless Access Point.

Shortly after the first 5200S modems was received, Armstrong's inventory department determined that their automated barcode reader was having difficulty reading the bar code strip on the 5200S modem. They reported the issue, and BEC immediately took action and implemented a change to a larger bar code. Armstrong also suggested a design modification to the 5200S' AC Adapter to insure that it would remain firmly in place during deployment. BEC quickly addressed this recommendation by re-designing the input on the power cord. Since BEC ADSL modems have been deployed, they have exhibited consistent high performance and reliability.

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Said Hillard, "Support has been very good. Any time we have a need, it gets addressed professionally and quickly."

Benefits Realized

As a result of the change to BEC ADSL modems, each Armstrong Telephone location has experienced an overall reduction in Customer Support Trouble Tickets requiring modem replacement. "With nearly 1000 units deployed, we have had an insignificant number of failures." said Hillard. The result, reflecting an overall reduction in tickets that result in modem replacements from 18% to 14%. "Overall, we have trended the right way.", said Hillard. "I suspect the BEC 5200S has much to do with this."

The barcode change and power cord modification exhibits BEC's willingness to do what it takes to work with its customer base to consistently tailor the product line to meet their direct needs. "This is a case where BEC has continued to foster a true partnership with our client. BEC and Armstrong Telephone have developed a strong team that goes beyond just supplying a modem and subsequent internet access. We have worked together to develop a relationship that exceed the requirement of simply providing a product and instead delivers solutions for their end customer", said Jesse Lin, V.P. and G.M. of BEC Technologies' North American division.

In closing, Hillard added, "It was refreshing to get the support from BEC to implement a change of this nature for us. One significant problem with other modem vendors is we never bought enough volume to be able to leverage their support team to influence the request for changes. With BEC, we seem to be able to get the action."

