

UNUMPROVIDENT CASE STUDY

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– Sandy Cox, UnumProvident Contact Center Director



UnumProvident Turns to MegaPath to Enable Home-Based Call Center Program

UnumProvident (UNM) is the largest provider of group and individual disability income protection insurance in North America. Through its subsidiaries, UnumProvident Corporation insures more than 25 million people. It has paid as much as \$5.9 billion in total benefits to customers in a single year. With primary offices in Chattanooga, TN and Portland, ME, the company employs nearly 13,000 people worldwide.

IT Business Challenges

UnumProvident’s exponential growth caused the company to run out of room at its headquarters. Providing office space to its growing call centers proved to be a challenge for the company. UnumProvident considered moving its call center operation to a new, cost-efficient facility, but then the company identified a less expensive and more efficient option. **What if UnumProvident call center agents could work from home?** After conducting comparison research, UnumProvident determined that it made more financial sense to pursue the home-based work arrangement than to invest in additional real estate.

UnumProvident began identifying the requirements for developing a home-based call center program. The company established criteria to determine which call center agents would be best suited to work from home, what infrastructure would be needed to support the home-based agents, and how to effectively manage and measure the program.

While the company’s IT personnel initially helped launch the home-based work program, UnumProvident soon realized that supporting multiple teleworkers was going to be an ongoing challenge—something the IT department was not in a position to handle. The company needed a dedicated, reliable resource that could set up all of the network connections and equipment, offer around-the-clock support, and maintain close interaction with the call center managers.



Company
UnumProvident

Industry
Financial Services

Business Gains

Decrease in real estate costs

Increase in agent productivity

Reduce employee attrition rates



The MegaPath Solution

“After evaluating several different vendors, we selected MegaPath because they have the most comprehensive network access available, along with the proven capacity to handle all of our remote connectivity needs—from the initial procurement of the broadband lines, to the actual installation of the equipment, all the way through to the day-to-day support,” said Joe Aube, UnumProvident Systems Consultant II and Remote Access Project Leader. “UnumProvident made a significant corporate commitment to our home-based call center program,” said Aube. “MegaPath became our partner to make the entire effort a success.”

As a result of rolling out the home-based call center program, UnumProvident realized real estate cost savings and a 10% increase in worker productivity. The program rolled out to a few agents at a time in order to closely monitor the implementation process and evaluate the program’s effectiveness.

UnumProvident now has 85 full-time home-based call center agents. Its goal is to eventually have 50% of its call center workforce—120 agents—working from home. This meets UnumProvident’s real estate requirements and allows for at least half of its call center agents to be centrally located at its headquarters as part of a disaster recovery prevention measure. Home-based call center agents must qualify for the optional program and are required to maintain their remote offices for at least one year to offset deployment costs.

MegaPath delivers equipment and network access to each home-based agent and provides continuous 24 / 7 / 365 monitoring and support. When a network problem occurs, MegaPath proactively identifies and resolves the issue, often without the agent’s involvement. This is especially critical for reassuring the remote agents that their productivity will not be at risk. The MegaPath dedicated account team works closely with UnumProvident managers to facilitate ensure everything runs smoothly. Managers have access to a customized Web portal used to manage worker status with auto-notifications when anything changes.

Since initially implementing the home-based call center program, UnumProvident continues to see gains in employee productivity and improved worker attrition rates. The industry’s average attrition rate is 26%; UnumProvident hopes to keep attrition significantly lower than that by allowing call center agents to work from home, an arrangement that promotes happier and better-adjusted workers.

“We have been very pleased with the early positive results from implementing our teleworker call center program. With MegaPath’s support, UnumProvident has a program that operates extremely well and fulfills the needs of our company and our workers,” said Sandy Cox, UnumProvident contact center director. “Rather than just being a step along the way for first-time job seekers, UnumProvident has become a destination for experienced employees who value a flexible workplace.”

The MegaPath Advantage

UnumProvident chose MegaPath as its home-based call center partner. MegaPath, a single source managed services provider (MSP), was able to implement all of the remote network connectivity requirements for each call center agent.

Unlike more traditional teleworker arrangements that involve occasional at-home workers, UnumProvident expected the remote call center agents to be virtual office workers at all times. They had to be able to conduct business in the most productive, real-time manner possible. UnumProvident required that its MSP deploy managed broadband access and a site-to-site VPN service that resembled a fully functional business office.

