

THE KROGER CO.

Gaining consistency across an enterprise

The Kroger Co., based in Cincinnati, Ohio, is America's largest grocery store chain and the second largest grocery retailer by volume. Kroger also is the second largest general retailer in the country. As of 2010, Kroger operated 3619 stores, either directly or through its subsidiaries. It reported \$82.2 billion in sales during fiscal year 2010. That same year, it was also the world's fifth largest retailer by sales revenue, according to Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited.



The Challenge

As the pre-eminent grocery store chain in the U.S., Kroger needs to connect with not only customers, but also employees and vendors around the globe. Staying in contact requires employees to have a reliable communications provider offering easy-to-use conferencing services, available customer support and simple billing procedures. With its previous provider, Kroger experienced unreliable customer support and widespread confusion over service invoices. Specifically, terminated accounts were never completely eliminated, leading to unintended account sharing and inaccurate bills. Kroger desired a provider that would offer timely customer service and straightforward billing.

The InterCall Solution

From January of 2010 through January 2011, Kroger implemented InterCall's Reservationless-Plus® audio conferencing platform, Operator Assisted conferencing and Microsoft® Office Live Meeting for 2500 corporate-side employees. The Reservationless-Plus conferencing service gives employees access to dedicated conference call bridge numbers, codes and PINs to initiate calls. The service made internal weekly meetings or impromptu calls easy through features like anytime access and scheduling via Microsoft Outlook® Office Live Meeting which connected Kroger with its customers and vendors through intuitive audio controls and rich multimedia options, including recordings of the meetings for increased engagement.

Moreover, Operator Assisted conferencing gave Kroger the ability to get immediate customer support when required -- before, during or after calls. This InterCall service meant that Kroger's internal IT team could refocus its attention on strategic departmental issues and no longer be weighed down with the daily issues pertaining to conference call quality and support.

Underlying InterCall's audio platform is a powerful capability: invoicing. What was once a tangled web of redundant forms and hard-to-follow invoices, with Kroger's previous

"The move to InterCall's Reservationless-Plus platform has drastically decreased issues that were becoming more prevalent on the older Sprint platform."

*Eva Padgett
Network Operations & Engineering
The Kroger Co*

provider, is now a simplified process with InterCall. Billing is broken down by division, EDI billing and cost center standards. The approach made an immediate impact by reducing the time Kroger employees spent sorting out billing issues among departments

The Benefits

Kroger realized several benefits by moving to InterCall's Reservationless-Plus, Operator Assisted and Live Meeting, including:

- Better conference call quality, leading to greater satisfaction among users
- The ability to send post-conference call emails for increased interaction among attendees
- A simplified conferencing process, thereby reducing the time necessary to address follow-up questions and comments
- Straightforward billing
- 24/7 customer support
- Ability to use IOL to create new accounts, terminate accounts, manage billing across 18 division accounts, and being able to login and view the meetings (as the owner) – to be able to manage the call, from muting to disconnecting offending music on hold