

# DESIGN WITHIN REACH

CASE STUDY:

## DESIGN WITHIN REACH

### At a Glance:



#### Situation:

- Fast growth made it difficult to maintain disparate phone systems at each new retail location
- Needed a less expensive and complex alternative that would offer centralized management
- Sought an innovative, easy system built on modern technology

#### Solution:

- Mitel VoIP phone solution

#### Results:

- Half the hardware cost of their legacy system
- Easier installation and maintenance
- High user satisfaction with features
- Easy to use IP phones

### Summary

Rapidly growing retailer Design Within Reach was weighed down by communications that were costly and difficult to maintain. Mitel's VoIP phone solution offered the elegant design and ease of management required for Design Within Reach to keep up with expansion.



## Company

Design Within Reach, Inc. makes authentic modern design accessible. Founded in 1998, the company markets and sells its furniture and accessories to both residential and trade customers through its retail studios in the United States and Canada.

### Situation

The IT department at Design Within Reach was managing 35 retail locations. Each location had its own separate Nortel voicemail and phone system. Beyond the complexity of supporting disparate systems, the legacy Nortel gear had become expensive, obsolete and difficult to deploy.

With the retailer adding 20 new locations a year, Design Within Reach needed a cost-effective alternative to its existing phone system that could be centrally managed, easy to deploy and simple to maintain. Although Design Within Reach had avoided VoIP in its technology infancy, the retailer revisited the mature technology. After a successful pilot at one store, the retailer decided IP telephony was its best option.

“We wanted a system built on today’s technology,” says Joe Martins, Director of Information Services for Design Within Reach, adding that most of today’s IT professionals don’t understand legacy gear, but can maintain IP telephony systems with relative ease.

With a business case based on long-range cost and management, Design Within Reach began its search. Its plan was to deploy VoIP systems at new sites and migrate legacy phone systems to IP telephony over time. The retailer wanted to centrally manage telecommunications so its help desk team could support the phone system. Centralized voicemail was also crucial because the company could eliminate the costs to maintain a separate voicemail system.

The retailer investigated phone systems from multiple vendors, ruling out several systems as expensive and complicated; such complexity would mean keeping a third-party technician on the line.

Design Within Reach decided on the Mitel solution, and Martins particularly liked Mitel’s elegant design and straightforward fit with the company’s business needs. The retailer was impressed by Mitel’s expertise in IP telephony and the maturity of its phone system.

“We wanted a system we could implement ourselves and that anyone on my help desk team could manage,” Martins says. “Mitel was that system. Centralized voicemail and centralized management makes it easier for the IT staff to support so many geographically distributed locations.”

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**Joe Martins, Director of Information Services,  
Design Within Reach**

The Mitel system promised significant cost savings because it didn’t require outside technical support. Design Within Reach put a lid on the escalating costs of long distance, with the toll bypass inherent in IP telephony. That cost-effectiveness combined with Mitel’s sleek, ergonomic design and capabilities like centralized, web-based administration made the decision to deploy Mitel a solid one.

## Solution

Design Within Reach has been pleased with the success of the Mitel rollout. The first site was operational in less than a day, says Martins. The company has deployed Mitel systems in 24 other sites, and plans to convert the entire organization to Mitel.

Because of the ability of the Mitel system to interface with legacy phone systems, Design Within Reach can deploy the new system at its own pace and not disrupt its business communications. This is a benefit of the Mitel system and is a competitive advantage for the retailer. Design Within Reach can integrate Mitel with its Nortel legacy system and pass voicemail back and forth and transfer calls.

Even though Martins and his team had selected the Mitel system because of its ease of implementation, they were still pleasantly surprised by the ease of deployment. After the first site was up and running, Design Within Reach handled all of the deployments itself, with no outside consulting help.

Design Within Reach installed Mitel ShoreGear voice switches, which support 40 IP phones or eight analog ports in each new location. The retailer also implemented a ShoreGear T1 at the corporate headquarters, which supports over 100 Mitel IP phones. Workers use the Mitel Personal Call Manager for calls, access to voicemail and setting up conference calls. Personal Call Manager is integrated with Microsoft Outlook for maximum convenience. The retailer also has numerous mobile employees using the Mitel softphone, so they can place calls on the road using their laptops and handhelds.

## Results

Mitel costs less than half the price of Design Within Reach's legacy hardware because of the savings in gear and setup costs. Such savings really pay off when multiplied by the retailer's aggressive plans to open new studio locations. But the retailer is realizing many benefits beyond the dramatically lower implementation costs. Plus, Martins says, the Mitel system is much easier to administer, requires no external help and there are far fewer support calls.

**"Mitel mobility has been revolutionary for us. We can give up our physical IP phones and take our extensions everywhere."**

**Joe Martins, Director of Information Services,  
Design Within Reach**

The Mitel solution offers functionality that wasn't available in the company's previous phone system. For example, Design Within Reach can now create greetings for each store to inform customers about sales and promotions.

Four-digit dialing among locations is simple, saves money and time and improves communications between individual stores and corporate headquarters. Also, traveling area managers can sign into a phone in another office and all of their phone calls will follow them to that extension. They no longer miss phone calls when they're on the road.

"The studios that don't have the Mitel system can't wait to get it," says Martins.



## Learn More

Find out more about Mitel's UC solutions at [mitel.com](https://mitel.com).