Construction Monitor Builds on RingCentral Call Data

Company profile

Construction Monitor is the industry source for building and solar permit information in the United States, and provides targeted leads to building professionals, general contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers nationwide.

Year founded

1989

Website

constructionmonitor.com

Headquarters

Cedar City, UT

Size

100+ employees/contractors

RingCentral customer since

2011

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>
> **—David Mineer, CEO**

Since 1989, Construction Monitor has been aggregating data on building permits and turning them into sales leads for builders and subcontractors.

Today, Construction Monitor is very much a web-based business, recruiting customers online and distributing leads through a web portal. There are still low-tech aspects to the business, such as pulling paper records from government offices that aren't online. But using the RingCentral Application Programming Interface (API), Construction Monitor now treats its phone system like any other programmable web resource. With custom reports based on data retrieved through the API, sales managers can see outbound call activity at a glance. A dashboard displays the number and duration of calls by salesperson, broken into 30-day, 7-day, and same-day reporting segments.

Salespeople can also see their own call metrics in comparison to those of their peers, which tends to bring out their competitive streaks, according to Construction Monitor President David Mineer, Jr. "Definitely once we put this out there, call volumes shot up dramatically." (In the first month, the average call count shot up from 525 to over 600 per sales representative, although it hasn't stayed quite that high.)

Call volume doesn't tell the whole story, but taken in context is a leading indicator. On the day Mineer spoke with us, his top salesperson was number two on the list, while the person making the most calls was relatively far down in the rankings, judged by sales totals. On the other hand, those near the bottom of the list for call volume also tended to be low in the rankings for sales volume, he said. Call duration helps as an additional indicator of engagement, but one that also demands context. Someone making a large number of cold calls would rank high on volume, but it would only be natural for the average duration to be low.

By accessing RingCentral data through the API, Construction Monitor gets the opportunity to present the data in the context of its operations. An obvious next step, currently under development, would be integrating sales metrics on the same dashboard.

"If we could mash that up, that would be awesome," says Mineer. There is no prize for making the most calls, he says, a salesperson's reward is always for making more sales. By studying call and sales data together, he hopes to find patterns of success that will help the whole sales team perform better.

Growing the business

Headquartered in Cedar City, Utah, Construction Monitor is a national business, having so far achieved about 40% coverage of the building departments around the US from which it gets data. Mineer's ambition is get that to 90%, and triple the number of customers, within the next few years.

The typical Construction Monitor customer is a subcontractor seeking potential customers. Building permits tell the story. Of particular interest are people starting renovations (or building their own homes) who decide to act as their own general contractor—meaning they will need the services of subcontractors in specialties like plumbing or flooring. Construction Monitor shares those leads with subscribers.

As the son of the company founder, Mineer made one of his first contributions to the business as a teenager, using the dBase III personal computer database to organize sales and permit data. Today, he still pays attention to the technical foundation of his business. Mineer sees RingCentral as one of a handful of scalable and flexible cloud services giving Construction Monitor access to the same kind of technology used by big enterprises. True cloud technology partners

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like RingCentral are "scalable, allow us to get in at a price we can afford, but can also grow with us as we grow—and we want that to be fast," he says.

In addition to creating custom API apps, he sees potential to boost sales productivity using RingCentral's integration with Salesforce.com for click-to-call dialing of sales prospects.

Beyond saving money, Mineer was motivated to move to a cloud phone system because he wanted the flexibility for himself and employees to access the same extension whether they were in the office, at home, or on the road. He also likes knowing he can add phone lines quickly, without adding complexity.

Building on the RingCentral Platform

Lead developer and technology manager Daniel Heighton says Construction Monitor picked RingCentral based on its core features, but the API is a bonus. "We have the programming expertise, and now we're able to leverage it," he said.

Although he could retrieve the same data through RingCentral's administration tools, API access allows him to present just the data sales management needs to see, in the format that they want to see it. For example, they don't want to see all the call data, just the calls made by the sales staff, Heighton says. In addition, he gets the option of treating that data as an input into more comprehensive dashboards or reports.

Before Construction Monitor moved to RingCentral from another cloud phone service, Heighton produced a very similar report on call volume and duration, but not through an API. Instead, the sales manager had to download a spreadsheet and upload it into an application Heighton had created. The software matched extensions to the names of the sales representatives and graphed the results. "The sales manager liked

having the data, but he didn't like the work it took to get it," Heighton says.

Heighton immediately saw the potential of the RingCentral API to provide him with much easier access to the same data. Construction Monitor became an early member of the beta program and one of the first to go live with an API application, in May 2015. "It's one of two APIs I use that I've never had an issue with," he says. A couple of other APIs he depends on, from other companies, "go down weekly," he says. "RingCentral has never had an issue that I know of."

The API itself is "very professional, with simple methods, and brings back very detailed data," Heighton says. He processes that data within a custom application Construction Monitor uses to track customers and sales performance, then feeds it into another cloud application, Geckoboard's dashboard software.

In addition to integrating the call data with sales data, Heighton wants to use Geckoboard's data visualization capabilities to make the information easier to understand at a glance—something he has done to a greater extent with other company performance reports.

The next API function he wants to explore is SMS text messaging. Construction Monitor could then notify customers on their phones, rather than via email, when it has new leads for them. There are other cloud services for texting, but Heighton sees the advantage of texting as part of an integrated platform. That means the messages would come from a Construction Monitor phone number that customers could easily text back or call back. Most other bulk text messaging services send out messages from a 5-digit code rather than a phone number, he noted.

With RingCentral, "you get a unified front you can present to your customer," he says.

RingCentral, Inc. 20 Davis Drive, Belmont, CA 94002. ringcentral.com

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