Travelers Haven Fills Temporary Housing Needs Faster With RingCentral Office and Glip

Company profile

Travelers Haven is an on-demand, full-service housing firm that delivers safe and affordable solutions for staff relocations and temporary stays. Travelers Haven provides customized housing solutions at more than 70,000 properties in 6,500 cities across North America.

Website

travelershaven.com

Year founded

2008

Headquarters

Denver, Colorado

Size

110 employees

RingCentral Glip users:

About 95 percent of the staff is active on RingCentral Glip and everyone uses RingCentral Office® as the company phone system.

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—Daniel Jagd, Vice President of Strategic Relations

Travelers Haven is in the corporate housing business, an industry that often revolves around responding to immediate demands. For instance, a client may need temporary living quarters for a software developer flown in to rescue a struggling project or a medical specialist brought in to fill a critical hospital staff shortage.

The faster Travelers Haven responds to a request for housing, the more likely it is to win the deal. In fact, the entire process tends to happen quickly. A lease may be audited, signed, and overnighted with a check. Furniture might be delivered by 11 a.m., with basic utilities, cable, and internet turned on at the same time. A concierge service needs to make sure everything goes right. And by 2 p.m., the apartment is move-in ready for the new resident.

"To get all that done, in that amount of time and without error, the communication within our internal staff has to be flawless," says Daniel Jagd, the company's Vice President of Strategic Relations.

The company's original business, which remains one of its strengths, was finding housing for traveling doctors and nurses recruited by hospitals when they are short-staffed on critical specialties. As it has grown, Travelers Haven has expanded into supporting relocations and other corporate housing needs.

Travelers Haven keeps its costs down by acting as a broker, rather than a landlord. "We do a date match," Jagd explains, helping clients find the best match for their specific needs with the properties in its catalog. Travelers Haven then takes care of all the details of securing a lease, getting ready for a new tenant, and restoring it to its original condition after the tenant leaves.

Unlike competitors who own the properties they rent, Travelers Housing does not have to build the cost of supporting vacant properties into its pricing. The company says it does enough volume with property owners and other vendors to keep its prices 23 percent below those of its national competitors.

Part of Jagd's job is to manage relationships with suppliers, from furniture vendors to technology providers. The software engineers at Travelers Haven have already worked hard to maximize the company's productivity by mapping out the core workflows for all the tasks that must be completed for clients. Yet for every transaction recorded in the system, there are dozens of conversations that have to take place for the organization to excel in its work. By accelerating communication and collaboration with RingCentral Office and RingCentral Glip, Travelers Haven can make those core workflows even more efficient.

The challenge

Travelers Haven originally switched to RingCentral Office to gain flexibility. The company was already using RingCentral to send and receive faxes via email, and Jagd began investigating what other services RingCentral could provide.

Travelers Haven does not employ a receptionist to answer and route calls, instead relying on call queues to make multiple phones ring simultaneously until someone picks up. As the business expanded and the volume of incoming calls rose, Jagd was looking for a better way of making sure more of those calls would be answered

and fewer would go to voicemail. After he saw a demonstration of how easily phone queues can be configured and managed in RingCentral Office, Jagd realized how inadequate his company's old phone system was in comparison. Seeing the advantages of a cloud-based phone system that would benefit from continual improvements, he began lobbying for a switch to RingCentral.

Then one day Jagd and CEO Elia Wallen were meeting off-site with a customer when the customer's mobile phone rang. "She answered her office phone using the RingCentral app, and it was one of our employees calling to check with her on something," Jagd says. This spontaneous demonstration of the power of a programmable, mobile-friendly phone system made an impression, he says. "My CEO turned to me and said, 'RingCentral? Isn't that what you were saying we should be using?'"

Suddenly, any doubts about switching phone systems melted away and Travelers Haven soon made the switch to RingCentral Office as its phone system. Next, the company added RingCentral Glip team messaging and collaboration software. Because staff members already had RingCentral accounts and were using the RingCentral for Desktop softphone, they could sign into both with the same password while adding Glip features such as click-to-call dialing.

"It's connected right into our phone system, so I don't have to do a lot of extra management of Glip," Jagd says. "Instead of having to send out an email saying, 'John's just been hired and here is his IM handle,' now he's automatically in the directory, and it's done."

Glip's ability to share and collaborate around images also turned out to be a big advantage. A typical scenario might be sourcing a property for a specific need, where the request is to place a doctor in an apartment

with upscale amenities that is within five miles of the client's hospital. "The territory manager can send the account manager a quick message, saying, 'Take a look at these pictures. I think they would really like this.' If the answer is, 'Yes, that looks fantastic,' we can gather the rest of the information—but we are not wasting time sourcing apartments that the account manager knows aren't going to fit."

If the account manager or another team member has questions, RingCentral Glip makes it easy to collaborate around visual information by attaching comments to specific regions of an image. For example, to point out damage to a couch in an apartment photo, you could click on the couch to add your note. Making the context clear speeds communication and eliminates misunderstandings, Jagd says.

Improving the efficiency of communications is particularly important in the context of sales, Jagd says. "We have analyzed our orders as they come in, and we can see that if we get a housing option to a client within 24 hours, the close ratio is almost 50 percent," he explains. "If we get it to them after 24 but before 48 hours, it drops by 12 percent, and after 48 hours it drops by like another 20 percent. So the bottom line is, the quicker we can get an option in front of our client the more likely they are to accept it."

The results

Both RingCentral Office and RingCentral Glip have helped Travelers Haven improve the efficiency of its operations.

The original reason for adopting RingCentral Office was to reduce the number of calls that are missed and go to voicemail, and Jagd says he has seen significant progress. Just recently, working with his RingCentral account manager, he recently devised a new call configuration that reduced the percentage of missed calls from more than 30 percent to less than 5 percent.

"That's a nice win," he says. "We identified a problem, and RingCentral had the flexibility to give us a solution to that problem."

In the seven months since adopting RingCentral Glip, sales rose about 11 percent. Much of the credit goes to the sales staff, as well as improvements in the company's own systems such as its customer portal. But improved communications and collaboration is also part of the story, Jagd says.

A more direct correlation would be with staff efficiency, he says. "One of the things we track is the number of orders a territory manager can handle in a day. It's eight now. A year ago, it was five or six," he says. "The ability to communicate about a property in real time is part of that. If it's not a fit, they can move on quicker to find one that's a better match. And if it fits, they can move on to the next order."

Fast, high-quality service requires team effort. That includes the extended team of suppliers, some of whom have been invited into Glip as guest users. At the time of our interview, Jagd's contact at a furniture vendor was online, prompting him to say, "I could send her a Glip message right now, and she would get back to me in 30 seconds."

Each functional area within the company, from housing and logistics to quality assurance, has its own Glip team. However, what really matters is how all those teams combine their efforts, Jagd says. "They all have very specialized tasks, but they all have to work together. Glip is probably the number one way they communicate."