American Swim Academy finally finds a reliable telecom partner that understands and delivers on their needs, saving them nearly $20k per year

Challenges

Ask anyone in the Bay Area where to get swim lessons, and inevitably, American Swim Academy will be at the top of the list. Its humble beginnings can be traced back to a school teacher who had a dream to teach swimming lessons during the summer and opened American Swim Academy as a way to earn extra income. Over the next 50 years, one location in Fremont, California, turned into five, including Newark, Livermore, Dublin, and Walnut Creek. What was once a side gig is now a full-time family business that has given thousands of children and adults a lifelong love of the water.

With so many sessions and students, keeping schedules humming is no easy feat. The phones are constantly ringing, and hundreds of students come in and out of the doors each day. Everything must run like a tightly choreographed dance, and the phone system pulls it all together. Aaron assumes the role of IT Director and CTO, making it his responsibility to ensure they have reliable phones that always work. When he came on board, American Swim Academy had PBX boxes and copper landlines that were expensive to maintain. The boxes were being phased out, so he switched everything over to Cisco PBX boxes and added VoIP as a backup for four locations.

It worked, but Aaron didn't love the fact that Cisco dictated everything, leaving him without any control over how the phones were implemented and configured. After only two months, Cisco said they, too, were phasing out their boxes. Aaron once again looked for alternatives and landed on Asterisk FreePBX, deciding to go completely digital with VoIP, with an E1 card that talked to the PRI switch.

Overview

- **Client:** American Swim Academy
- **Sites:** 5 California locations
- **Solution:** Voice SIP, Flowroute HyperNetwork™
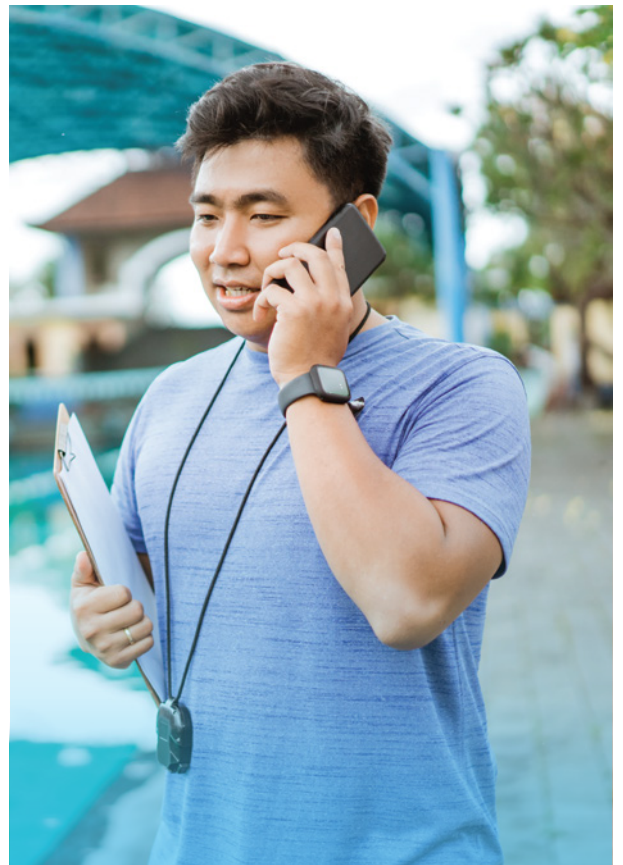
One problem was solved, but there was also the major issue of phone carrier reliability. Both major carriers had problems with service uptime. Callers were getting busy signals at their busiest times, and as a child-centric business with parents who expect someone to answer their calls, that was unacceptable. He was paying a lot for unreliable service, close to $400 per month per location.

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Solution

Aaron researched providers and chose Flowroute since, at his previous company, Flowroute was able to reduce his phone bill significantly. "When I compared Flowroute cost with what we were paying, I realized Flowroute could save me $18,000 per year."

Furthermore, Flowroute was easy to work with thanks to its portal and processes. Aaron felt he finally had landed on a long-term telecom solution. "I knew the Flowroute technology and how easy it was to implement," he says. "It took me 10 minutes to switch over to them. All I had to do was create a gateway on the Asterisk PBX and tell it to use that instead of the PRI card that's in the system. It couldn't have been any easier."

Flowroute provided each American Swim Academy location with SIP trunks. Aaron only had to enter the credentials given to him by Flowroute and tell the system which trunk to use in what order in case of a failure. Aaron tested Flowroute out on his FreePBX phones, having outbound calls going through Flowroute instead of the existing phone carrier. It worked perfectly.

Compared with other providers he was evaluating, Flowroute stood out. "Hands down, Flowroute had better response time and more availability than any other provider," says Aaron. "They are always there, and their system hasn't gone down once since I switched over to them. Let me tell you, that matters."

Aaron is just one man responsible for five busy locations, making telecom support more than just a convenience–it's a lifeline. For example, Flowroute recognized how important business continuity was to Aaron and identified an area of vulnerability, even with VoIP and two backup data centers. His Flowroute account manager told him about Flowroute's patented HyperNetwork™. If something major happens at the carrier level, it automatically takes over without Aaron having to do anything. HyperNetwork ensures business continuity by dynamically rerouting incoming calls around network and carrier outages, something no other provider offers.

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Flowroute has two separate data centers, giving Aaron peace of mind there is a reliable backup in place should one data center go down. He also has all the control he wants, with access to his personalized portal to manage each location's systems with the touch of a button.

Before, Aaron would have to call the phone company to do even the simplest things. They couldn't send anyone out on the weekends, even though the Academy locations are open seven days a week and must have working phones at all times. With Flowroute, if something major happens at the carrier level, HyperNetwork ensures business continuity by dynamically rerouting incoming calls around network and carrier outages, something no other provider offers.

"I was spending more time on hold with the phone company than it took me to switch over to Flowroute. I've only had to call Flowroute twice, and that was to fix my own mistakes, and within three minutes on the phone, they fixed the issue. Because it's all cloud-based, no one had to come out, and I didn't spend hours on the phone like I did with our last carrier."

Another key priority for Aaron is cost savings. Flowroute analyzed the consolidated call volume across locations and determined when busy seasons were averaged out with quieter seasons, the Academy met the monthly minimum for the per-minute volume discount. "The fact that they proactively called me to tell me they could save me an additional $1,200? What company does that? I was paying $22,000 with our previous provider, and now, it's under $5,000. As a small business, that's massive."

Finally, Aaron said he's impressed with the personalized approach Flowroute offers. "Talking to Flowroute is like talking to an IT specialist," he says. "They answer when I call or email. No support tickets, no repeating myself or listening to an inexperienced person read a script. Just real experts who know what to do. When I think of all I've had to deal with before, they get all my praise."

Today, American Swim Academy not only has reliable phones and support for a fraction of what they were paying before, but they are also able to be more responsive to members and use their telecom savings to invest in the business.

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