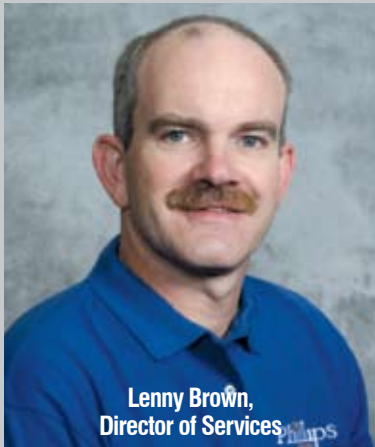


Customer Success Story *by Nici Sandberg, ECI Marketing*

The Phillips Group: Managing Multiple Areas with ECI La Crosse



Lenny Brown,
Director of Services

Dealership:
The Phillips Group

Industry: Document Management

Type of Dealership: Sharp

Employees: 37-40 technicians

Annual Sales: \$65 million

The Phillips Group is a multi-faceted company made up of multiple businesses and divisions with an annual revenue of \$65 million. One of those divisions is a \$22-million document management operation, managed by the ECI La Crosse business system.

The Middletown, Pa.-based company has six locations for document management, including a Baltimore location that exists as a separate entity and runs a separate La Crosse system.

This Sharp dealership was founded in 1940 by Walter Phillips, who started

the business as a used typewriter store. The company was purchased by current owners, David and Peter Phillips (no relation to Walter, nice coincidence though), in 1984.

The Phillips Group is a large, stable business, and it trusts La Crosse to manage that business.

Contract Billings, Reports & Barcode Readers

Lenny Brown, director of service for The Phillips Group and La Crosse user, says some of the software's best

features are contract billings, barcode reading, Night Auditor, reports, and the overall flexibility of the software.

"To me, the strongest part of the software is that it has really worked well for us on the contract side," says Brown. "Contracts and contract billings, that's what really sold me on the system. We went from a system we were on for 13 years, which was really a supply package where they just added on a contract piece—it just wasn't very flexible."

Brown goes on to say about La Crosse, "It's really tough to find a contract you can't fit into it. Almost everything the sales team comes up with fits into one of the methods we've built. It's solid, it works. Let's face it, in today's industry, if you can't get your maintenance contracts billed properly—our maintenance contracts are probably 95 percent of what we bill in service—if you don't have that locked down, you're in trouble."

The La Crosse contracts billing is just one of the features that has helped The Phillips Group save time and money — and headaches. The Phillips Group makes use of the automated reports

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Phillips

and even keeps a full-time Crystal Reports writer on staff.

“We make good use of the Night Auditor, where we can get the standard reports every day. First thing in the morning, turn on the computer and there’s my inventory report. Whatever report I need is there waiting for me,” says Brown.

The Phillips Group is also taking advantage of barcode readers, and Brown says it has dramatically improved the inventory process.

“We’ve made pretty good use of the barcode readers,” says Brown. “Probably one of the biggest time-savers we have is the new cycle count and inventory process for parts. Before we had barcode readers, it would take us on average two-and-a-half hours to inventory a tech’s van—now we’re down to a half hour. It’s one of the biggest cost-savers we’ve seen. Our techs carry anywhere from \$8,000 to \$10,000 worth of parts in a van. Inventory used to just be a nightmare. Some of the guys took four hours from start to finish because you had to make all of the adjustments. Trying to inventory 37-40 techs every quarter, it never got done. Now it’s an automated process. It’s a huge improvement.”

Brown says that using the barcode readers for inventory has not only saved time and money, but has also improved customer service. “It improves our effectiveness. It gives techs more time in the field. Before, we just couldn’t do all the inventories. The more you check inventory, the more accurate it’s going to be. When we did semi-annual inventories, it was a disaster. Some of them would be missing half of what they were supposed to have.

Now that we use barcodes, we’ve tied a bonus to inventory level. Half of our guys come in, and they’re just right on. The bar coding process has really improved our accuracy. It’s improved that tremendously.”

Internal Leasing

The Phillips Group is doing well, even in today’s economy, and a part of that is due to the company’s structure and business model. One of the company’s assets is their own leasing company.

“We have an internal leasing company called Phillips Capital. A lot of our machine orders go through our internal leasing company. We invoice all of it through La Crosse: the lease portion and the service portion all at the same time,” says Brown. And if a customer needs to decrease their volume or make other changes to their contract, The Phillips Group can do that. “We do our leasing, we can be flexible, we can make changes. If someone needs to make a change, we’re responsive because we don’t have to go through a third-party leasing company.”

Because The Phillips Group does its own leasing, used office equipment is returned to the company at the end of a customer’s lease. The Phillips Group is then able to resell that equipment as used or return it to the wholesaler or, failing that, send the used machines to a local recycling company where the old machines are pulled apart and recycled.

Expanding Document Services

In the last six months, The Phillips Group has also added new areas of document services. The company

opened a print shop and has added document storage and shredding to its available services. Brown explains that this helps the company keep customers, at least in some capacity, which it may have lost otherwise.

“Anything related to our core business, we want to be the vendor of choice. The more you are to someone, the harder it is for them to leave,” Brown explains. “We could have a customer that is bought out by a national company, and they have to go through a national contract, but they’re not on a national contract for their document storage or shredding. So it keeps us in the account.”

Being able to do all of these services on one itemized invoice is also helpful for customer retention. Brown says, “We have customers that are looking to cut down to one or two vendors. They cut down to just one—and it is us—because we can do document storage, we can do the shredding, we can do all of their copiers and faxes, everything with one invoice. We do all of that through La Crosse. We can include all of those services in one lease payment and give the customer one itemized invoice.”

Brown says the La Crosse system helps them maintain their business during a down economy because it allows them to know what their costs are. The system also allows The Phillips Group to easily modify their business model.

“We’re always trying to think of ways to expand,” says Brown. “I’m not going to go out and service soft drink machines, but anything related to documents is ours.”

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