



**Industry:** Professional Services/Real Estate  
**Installation:** 2 ShoreGear voice switches,  
35 ShorePhone IP phones  
**Date of Install:** March 2005



### Challenge:

RE/MAX Premier Realty needed to set itself apart in a competitive marketplace and focused on providing advanced technology to surpass customer demands and keep talented agents.

### Solution:

ShoreTel provided the real estate agency with an IP telephony solution, including ShoreGear voice switches and ShorePhone IP telephones.

### Benefits:

- With ShoreTel, anxious clients (buyers and sellers) have access to realtors even when agents are out of the office.
- ShoreTel's workgroup and Find Me capabilities mean callers seldom reach voice mail – they will reach a real person.
- System is easy to manage in-house, with additions or changes being made in minutes; new agents can begin work and become productive within hours of starting at RE/MAX Premier Realty.

## S U C C E S S S T O R I E S

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES/REAL ESTATE

## RE/MAX PREMIER REALTY SETS ITSELF APART FROM THE COMPETITION WITH IP TELEPHONY FROM SHORETEL

### Converged Communications Attracts Agents and Meets Customer Satisfaction Demands in Competitive Environment

RE/MAX Premier Realty, located in Fredericksburg, Virginia, provides top quality real estate services and support to its clients by creating an exceptional workplace for its associates that fosters outstanding achievement. There are over 700 individual brokerage offices in the area directly competing for the \$2 billion-plus real estate market, and RE/MAX Premier Realty's success can be attributed greatly to its leadership in technology and dedication to providing its agents with tools that give them a significant competitive advantage.

From inception, a critical component of RE/MAX Premier Realty's competitive advantage was acquiring a telephone system that could be leveraged as an integral part of its technology platform. According to Larry Van Ness, Founder and President/CEO of RE/MAX Premier Realty, "I wanted to ensure that our agents were able to maximize the power of technology to stay in touch with clients more efficiently and effectively. For us, our technology had to be the competitive advantage strategy from day one, entering into this marketplace. Our survival was based on breaking the stereotypical mold and designing our business from the ground up like a Fortune 500 company."

### THE SELECTION PROCESS

Van Ness spoke with two independent consultants to get varying perspectives and to ensure he was not getting just one biased suggestion: a telecommunications consultant and an information technology consultant. He also researched extensively and found a number of IP telephony solutions in the marketplace. Eventually, he had come up with a list of three vendors through his research and from his consultants: Avaya, Nortel and ShoreTel. When it came to making a choice, Van Ness placed priority on ease of use, ease of management, and cost of ownership in terms of how long the system would last.

Van Ness cites that "ShoreTel is a technology that we feel we can use for years to come without becoming obsolete. By that, I mean the end user does not need to become expert on old technology in order to interact with the system like the other two, but rather the ShoreTel system is 'smart' enough to intuitively interact with you to work on your terms." He also notes that the ShoreTel system is easy to make changes to as far as moves, adds, and changes (MACs), which is an absolute necessity in the real estate world.



*“ShoreTel is a technology that we feel we can use for years to come without becoming obsolete.”*

**– Larry Van Ness**  
Founder, President/CEO,  
RE/MAX Premier Realty

## RE/MAX PREMIER REALTY SWITCHES

With the help of ShoreTel's reseller partner, also based in Fredericksburg, ShoreTel provided RE/MAX Premier Realty with a ShoreGear®-120 and ShoreGear-T1 voice switch, as well as a voice mail server and 35 ShorePhone™ IP 530 phones. ShoreWare® Director is used to manage the solution. ShoreTel's reseller designed the new phone system and rolled it out in a matter of two days. Realtors and other employees were trained on the system features in half-hour sessions as they were available, but most found the ShorePhones intuitive enough to figure out on their own. The IP telephony solution extends to the organization's headquarters, and Van Ness has implemented a VPN connection to his home office on the system, which allows him to securely make changes to the system whenever necessary. He can conduct business from this office in the same manner as if he's working at the central location (4-digit dialing is supported, caller-ID shows the headquarters number, long distance numbers are routed through headquarters, etc.).

“The reseller's representatives are simply stellar and their ability to translate business requirements into an outstanding technology platform is phenomenal,” said Van Ness. “Along with ShoreTel, the reseller is a critical piece of the overall success and strategic position of this company.”

## PREMIERE PRODUCTIVITY FOR PREMIER REALTY

ShoreTel phone systems are easy to use, simple to manage, flexible, and reliable. With the ShoreTel system in place, all RE/MAX Premier Realty employees are now on the same phone and voice mail system, using 4-digit dialing to reach colleagues at any location. The ShoreTel system, which is integrated directly with Microsoft Outlook on users' desktop computers, provides integrated messaging, such as directory dialing, contact screen pop, and calendar integration. ShoreWare Personal Call Manager™ gives RE/MAX Premier Realty associates the equivalent of a desktop PBX—a powerful, all-purpose tool for managing voice communications. With it, users can quickly browse contacts and make calls from local directories all from the desktop. With the e-mail integration employees can manage their e-mail and voice mail activity centrally and efficiently.

Personal Call Manager's friendly, graphical interface provides easy access to sophisticated features, including “on-the-fly” conferencing and document sharing, and dynamic, online directories eliminate paper directories that are often outdated. Voice mail messages are stored in the industry-standard WAV Audio for Windows format, allowing users to play them on multimedia PCs, attach them to e-mail messages or embed them in other documents. The ability of the ShoreTel system to track phone calls and export and distribute voice mails as WAV files is helpful in continually monitoring and improving customer service.

## RAISING THE BAR ON CLIENT SATISFACTION

ShoreTel's powerful Find Me feature allows employees to configure the system so that callers reach them—for instance, on their cell phone or home phone. If the person does not answer any of their phones, the call reverts back to the ShoreTel voice mail system. “It's important for a realtor to always be in touch with their clients,” says Van Ness. “It's their obligation. With ShoreTel, they are always in touch. They even know if they are receiving an



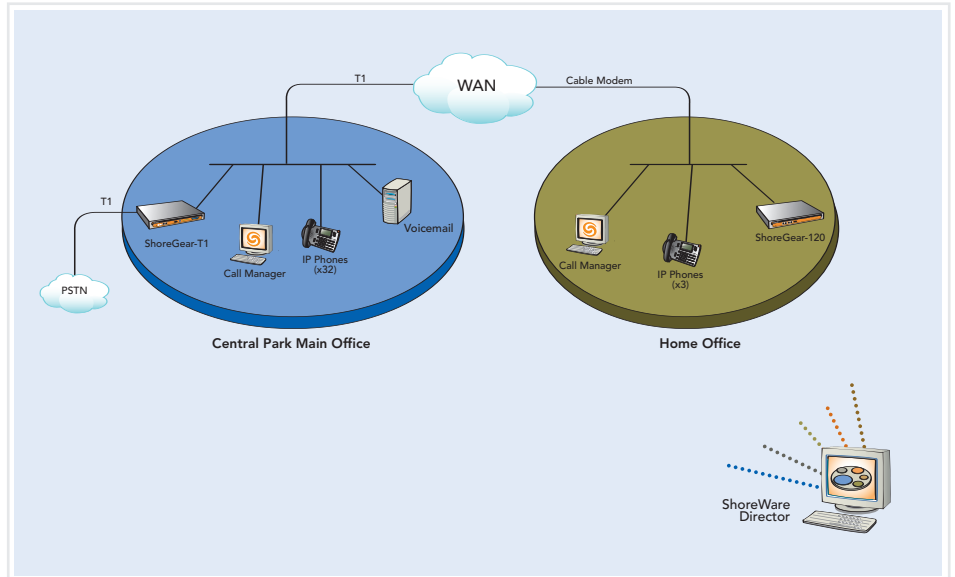
e-mail or fax when they're away from their computer – they're alerted right on their Blackberry. Conversely, the realtor doesn't always have to call into voice mail to see if he or she has a message—they can see if they have a message right on their phone. Many realtors are only in the office 10% of the time so we're committed to making sure they stay connected to their clients when they're on the go. ShoreTel helps us achieve that. It's a strategy not only to keep customers happy but also to keep good agents."

The quality of the speaker phone on the ShoreTel system has not gone unnoticed by the RE/MAX Premier Realty agents. "The agents love the speakerphone quality," said Van Ness. "The quality is excellent, and the client doesn't even know they're on speaker phone. The speaker phones enable agents to review multiple listing directories on their computers at the same time they're talking to a client on the phone. In many cases, the customer thinks the agent just has all these properties in their heads because they don't hear the difference in quality when the agent is on the speaker phone. Everything ShoreTel gives us is beneficial in terms of productivity or customer satisfaction."

ShoreTel's Workgroups also provides backup for RE/MAX Premier Realty receptionists so that callers are assured that someone answers their calls rather than being sent to voice mail during business hours. Workgroups also provides basic reporting capabilities to help measure call volume and make work schedule changes as necessary.

*"Too often, small companies think they can't have what the big Fortune 500 companies have because of complexity and cost. ShoreTel eliminates both of those challenges."*

**– Larry Van Ness**  
 Founder, President/CEO,  
 RE/MAX Premier Realty



RE/MAX Premier Realty deployed ShoreTel to two locations with 35 IP phones.

## EASE OF MANAGEMENT

RE/MAX Premier Realty utilizes ShoreTel's ShoreWare Director, a browser-based management interface that allows Van Ness to make changes or add new users. To add a new user, it is simply a matter of clicking "add new" and entering the user's name, which automatically updates the centralized database and every voice switch. Once the new user is added, a mailbox is created, the automated attendant dial-by-name and number feature is updated, and online directories are revised. The entire process takes just a few seconds.



*“Because the real estate business is so phone-and client-intensive, we simply could not risk a technology platform that wasn’t capable of delivering exceptional quality and reliability. I have and will continue to highly recommend ShoreTel as the phone system of choice to others.”*

**– Larry Van Ness**  
Founder, President/CEO,  
RE/MAX Premier Realty

“We just hired a couple of agents from a competing organization, and before they’d finished signing the papers, I had their phones up and running and I was able to take them back to their offices,” said Van Ness. “They were simply amazed—it’s just never been like that. If you were a new agent joining our company this morning, your phone, fax and e-mail accounts would be up and running by noon. That’s just good business.”

Scalability is another key to the future for RE/MAX Premier Realty. “We are excited to leverage ShoreTel because our business plan calls for the addition of more offices very soon,” said Van Ness. “I can simply add to our existing infrastructure, install a T1 between sites, purchase additional phones and do all of the management and support from this location. What a breeze!”

Reliability is also improved for RE/MAX Premier Realty. ShoreTel’s Call Control software is distributed to every voice switch, which eliminates any single point of failure. In the highly unlikely event a ShoreGear voice switch fails, the other switches on the network automatically take on the call-processing load. “The ShoreTel system works just like it’s advertised to work, right out of the box,” said Van Ness. “It’s high quality and has a reliability factor that would make any company proud. In short, ShoreTel does what it says it can do and it doesn’t break down.”

## **SHORETEL ELIMINATES COMPLEXITY AND MINIMIZES COSTS**

“Our recruiting and retention is made easier by our stellar technology platform, of which ShoreTel is a critical component,” said Van Ness. “Because the real estate business is so phone-and client-intensive, we simply could not risk a technology platform that wasn’t capable of delivering exceptional quality and reliability. I have and will continue to highly recommend ShoreTel as the phone system of choice to others. Too often, small companies think they can’t have what the big Fortune 500 companies have because of complexity and high cost. ShoreTel eliminates both of those challenges.”