



CASE STUDY

# SheppardMullin

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UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK



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Sheppard, Mullin, Richter and Hampton LLP (Sheppard Mullin) stands as one of the most prestigious law firms in the US. Founded in Los Angeles, CA in 1927, Sheppard Mullin is a full service firm, serving clients across the U.S. and internationally. As an AmLaw100 firm, Sheppard Mullin also ranks as the third largest law firm in the state of California.

In total, Sheppard Mullin's business communications network serves approximately 1,600 employees across 15 different offices worldwide; the company has seven offices in California alone. When managing a communications network of this magnitude, integration of real time communications services (Unified Communications/UC) provides an attractive solution, offering a consistent end-user experience with operational efficiencies and lower costs to maintain.

By combining the firm's telephony and business data on the same network, Sheppard Mullin gained the ability to leverage investments and use voice, data and video across their network. With the growing adoption of smart devices and BYOD, UC would also make mobile devices extensions of the corporate network, so employees could be productive anywhere — a necessity when operating a global enterprise. Despite all the advantages that UC brings to an organization, the network infrastructure required to support such robust communications must be carefully designed to avoid voice quality issues, lack of adoption and business interruption. Without careful planning, monitoring and management, a UC environment of this scale can compound existing network problems and create new ones.

Sheppard Mullin was aware that in order to take full advantage of all the benefits that UC offers to enterprise customers — and to eliminate new and potential network infrastructure issues — a robust UC monitoring tool was required.



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This case study highlights the story of how Sheppard Mullin, Nectar and Windstream, a trusted Nectar channel partner, were able to come together to provide in depth monitoring within the firm's UC network. In the end, Nectar, Sheppard Mullin and Windstream were able to implement a comprehensive monitoring tool that Sheppard Mullin relies on to avoid business interruption and proactively keep their VoIP solution running smoothly.

### **Sheppard Mullin's Challenge**

From a UC perspective, Sheppard Mullin's business communications infrastructure is a complex, enterprise environment, which spans several different countries, carriers and service level agreements. Adding to the intricacy, this communications infrastructure also included a number of disparate systems, hardware components and technology dependencies. In reviewing a variety of manufacturers, hosted and on-premise solutions, Sheppard Mullin made its selection and set its course to converge a sprawling communications network into a single system, leveraging the benefits and enterprise scalability of Avaya Aura Solutions.

With the adoption of a new UC enterprise, integrated VoIP system all riding on the the corporate network, the firm recognized the need to holistically manage this technology. The firm had little to no visibility, complex integration points



and interdependencies between voice and data infrastructure like never before. Sheppard Mullin realized the importance of implementing a monitoring tool that would lend total transparency into the firm's UC network.

Sheppard Mullin's Senior Telecommunications Engineer, Michael Bernardin, saw the benefit of using a comprehensive monitoring tool, to maintain a globally dispersed telecommunications network cost-effectively. Given the number of disparate systems, dependent technologies and a new direction to collapse the voice infrastructure into a cutting edge, converged UC network, Bernardin began searching for a comprehensive UC monitoring tool that offers proactive notification and service-level management to simplify an already-complex environment.

Sheppard Mullin's major emphasis was to gain visibility into the performance of its network at any given time, and to minimize unplanned downtime and elongated troubleshooting times when problems occurred. As a global firm operating in many locations from Los Angeles to Shanghai, Sheppard Mullin's underlying business communications environment had to run reliably and be relatively easy difficult to manage and monitor even after implementing UC. Essentially, Sheppard Mullin was looking for a robust solution that would allow in depth management of their complex UC network. It had to be easy to install, easy to use and require minimal effort to maintain, yet be robust enough to give them all the needed visibility with one solution.



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## The Nectar Solution

Working together with trusted partner, Windstream, Bernardin defined the monitoring tool requirements that he needed to instill confidence and derive the adoption of UC the firm needed by ensuring reliability, voice quality and a consistent end-user experience. Through a proactive monitoring tool with at-a-glance dashboards, skills based routing, ease of deployment and a real-time snapshot of how Sheppard Mullin's UC network was operating at any given moment, Sheppard Mullin believed their team could help minimize business interruption and increase the reliability of their already reliable platform.



*Nectar's Converged Management Platform (CMP) was the only answer to Bernardin's challenges with its at-a-glance dashboards, real-time voice quality and unique benefits of its Vendor Knowledge Modules (VKM) that:*

- **Automate the discovery process of an entire UC eco system in minutes;**
- **Create dependency trees to pinpoint the root cause of issues;**
- **Map interdependencies across disparate systems; and**
- **Deliver detailed inventory and reporting.**

These features coupled with skills-based routing, email and SMS notifications and SLA management allowed Bernardin to have a much deeper and broader insight into his UC network.

CMP had the capabilities Bernardin desired, but several key questions still remained. How would this solution help Bernardin be more proactive? In the real world, would the solution work the way it was supposed to work? These questions were quickly answered as Bernardin saw an immediate benefit after Windstream helped the law firm implement CMP. Within a relatively short time frame, Bernardin was quickly able to supplement daily operational tasks with proactive monitoring and maintenance and witness the expected results first hand.

## Sure Results from Nectar's Converged Management Platform

According to Bernardin, CMP provided the perspective the firms his engineers needed. On a single screen, Bernardin was able to look at the real-time health status of Sheppard Mullin's UC at a glance. Before implementing CMP, this kind of consolidation simply was not possible for Sheppard Mullin. To troubleshoot a single issue, Sheppard Mullin engineers used to have to pull several different reports, event logs and attempt to correlate data. CMP gave the team a snapshot of his VoIP traffic, real-time call quality and proactive notifications of trending issues. Now, resolving chronic issues is faster and easier than ever with the ability to search in real-time and historically as well as report on voice quality on a weekly and monthly basis.



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CMP worked so well for Sheppard Mullin that Bernardin was able to pinpoint a persistent problem with one of their network carriers that had gone unresolved for months. In typical fashion, the telecommunications provider was saying it was an internal problem, but the firm's IT team was adamant that it was the provider's problem. Thanks to the trunk utilization reports, voice quality reports and SLA module, the team was able to give the provider the necessary data to prove it was an external issue. This kind of accountability gave Sheppard Mullin a new outlook on how Sheppard Mullin intends to use CMP moving forward.

In addition to its powerful suite of management tools, CMP is able to map vast UC networks and generate synthetic traffic to give engineers a way to anticipate problems before they arise. Before implementing the Nectar solution, this level of proactive troubleshooting and traffic planning was not possible. Today, Sheppard Mullin has a much more comprehensive snapshot of how its UC network is performing at any given moment as well as the ability to conduct “what if” scenarios to determine if future changes will affect network performance.



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This success story highlights how quickly and how effective Nectar’s Monitoring and Management solutions can be used in the real world. Before implementing CMP, Sheppard Mullin was unable to leverage its UC infrastructure to its fullest extent. Today, Sheppard Mullin has several key capabilities at its finger tips to bring the benefits of UC to life.