

When Oil Prices Go Down...ALICE Deployment Goes Up

*The price of crude oil in May 2014 was nearly \$110 a barrel;
by January 2015 the price was less than \$50 per barrel.*



Brad Breaux
Manager of
Infrastructure Services

Stone Energy was hit hard by the \$60 per barrel drop in the price of crude oil. The reduction triggered investor sell-offs and the implementation of dramatic cost-cutting measures. Every operational budget was cut and headcount was reduced.

Stone Energy Corporation is an independent oil and natural gas exploration and production company headquartered in Lafayette, Louisiana with three additional offices in New Orleans, Houston and Morgantown, WV. They have oil and gas platforms in the Gulf of Mexico and operating facilities across West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Brad Breaux, Manager of Infrastructure Services, says, “Whenever oil and gas prices fall, like they did in the middle of 2014, one of the first personnel cuts we make is the full-time receptionists at the remote office locations.”

There is not a lot of foot traffic at the remote offices, but there is still a need to accommodate visitors without having somebody actually sitting at the front desk. That’s why Brad’s manager brought in an evaluation unit of ALICE Receptionist (WinTech, Las Vegas, NV) and said to Brad, “Get this thing going and see how well it works?”

Brad’s number one requirement was ease-of-use. He says, “To perform the receptionist functions we needed something that would allow visitors to walk up to it and, without explanation, be able to use it.

“We were impressed enough with the way ALICE Receptionist functioned that we put it in production within a week. We didn’t evaluate anything else because ALICE immediately served the purpose we were looking for.”

Stone Energy is using ALICE Receptionist at all four of its office locations. At the remote offices ALICE is the full-time receptionist. At the Lafayette headquarters there is still a receptionist from 9:00 to 4:00 and ALICE is used after hours. Brad elaborates, “We’re filling the receptionist function with people that work in the mail room. There are three of them that rotate at the front desk. Eventually we will have ALICE become the full-time receptionist.”





Success Story



ALICE Receptionist senses motion when a visitor walks into the lobby which activates an automated greeting, "Hi, I'm ALICE. Welcome to Stone Energy. If you'd like to contact the receptionist, the button is up here. If you would like to call a person directly, press the company directory here." ALICE can even print a visitor's badge.

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– Brad Breaux

ALICE Receptionist is tied to Stone Energy's CISCO Unified Communications Manager (CallManager.) To Cisco, the ALICE Directory looks just like another node on the telephone network. When a visitor touches a name on the ALICE Receptionist Directory, ALICE places a call through Call Manager to the selected employee.

For its content, the Alice Directory is synced with Stone Energy's existing Microsoft Active Directory. Whenever there is a change in the company staff, the names, titles, phone numbers and photos of the employee directory are automatically imported into Alice.

Brad talks about how easy it was to put ALICE Receptionist into production. "We had it working in our group for testing within two days of its arrival. That was un-boxing it, powering it up, getting it on the network, and WinTech doing the configuration and implementing it specifically for our CallManager and our Active Directory."

Stone Energy has a desktop system with a 42-inch Elo touch screen mounted to the stand. Brad says, "It's noticeable as soon as you walk into the lobby. It has our logo. It's personalized to our company.

"ALICE Receptionist has been a big win for us. The office managers' workload in greeting and handling visitors has gone down quite a bit. Visitors love it because it is really easy to use. They just walk up to the screen, touch a button and get an immediate response."

WinTech shows that companies that use ALICE Receptionist can handle reception functions at one-tenth the cost of a full time employee - a Return on Investment of less than 60 days! For companies in cost-cutting mode, like Stone Energy, the implementation of ALICE Receptionist has an immediate cost benefit.

Brad concludes, "In the year and a half that we've been working with ALICE we have found the people at WinTech to be very personable and responsive. If I have a question I get a call back within a few minutes. We get somebody that understands our network and our deployment. Whenever I call to get help, I don't have to explain to them how it's set up. They are responsive and personal, the two things that I enjoy the most about working with them. For us, ALICE was the right choice."