



## Financial Services

### Daily Use

- Deployed over 100 Wireless Telephones in the 45-story worldwide headquarters

### Solution

- Polycom® SpectraLink® 6000 Wireless Telephones

### Results and Benefits

- Supports high-density call volumes for the trading floor's busy and crowded environment
- Improved efficiency to minimize trading errors
- Ability to control class of service to provide restricted access to certain users

# Chicago Mercantile Exchange – Trading Desk Phones for Wireless Mobility

## Background

Fractions of a second can make or break a company on today's volatile trading floors. Contact between colleagues and clients in this environment must be reliable and immediate. The Chicago Mercantile Exchange, the world's largest futures trading institution, is accomplishing this by providing its floor traders with mobile communication using the Polycom® SpectraLink® 6000 Wireless Telephone System.

Financial professionals working on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange's trading floors use the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones with headsets to improve communications in various ways. Some traders and brokers use the portable, full-functioning Wireless Telephones to make calls throughout the day, both internally and externally. Other financial professionals use their Wireless Telephones to conference with several colleagues, trading critical information for hours at a time.

"This is a harsh environment for a wireless system," said Roger Crabtree, director of Communications for the Exchange.

"The way this evolved, most people never imagined you could have 400 users in one space. We are using wireless technology to make our people more mobile and efficient in a fixed environment."

## Rising Above the Noise

Physical conditions on the trading floor also made a difference in the type of solution that would adequately address all of the needs of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. The large number of users in one contained environment can create an almost deafening level of noise at times, straining communications between traders and their customers.

"It's like standing on a runway out there," Crabtree said. "People are yelling to bid, like an auction. Without using a conventional headset, these people wouldn't be able to hear a thing."

In addition to the SpectraLink system thriving in a demanding environment, the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones are making business on the floor more efficient.

*"The SpectraLink system has been performing extremely well and we are very happy with the choice we made. It's exciting to provide this level of service to customers with such extraordinary needs."*

*Roger Crabtree, director of Communications for the Exchange*

*"The SpectraLink system has enabled traders to do more business with fewer errors."*

*Roger Crabtree, director of Communications for the Exchange*

"The SpectraLink system has enabled traders to do more business with fewer errors," Crabtree said. "Those errors can cost a company millions of dollars. The market moves huge numbers in a matter of seconds, particularly in today's volatile market. With the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones, we have been able to capitalize on that volatility, resulting in a rise in volume on the trading floor. Without the handsets, we would be looking at different numbers today."

### **Clamoring for Top Quality**

In the initial phase of its installation, 70 SpectraLink Wireless Telephones were deployed among traders and other staff across the two trading floors, which span 3,000 square feet each. The trading areas are situated on two separate floors with 45-foot high ceilings.

Keeping customers connected has always been a priority for the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. And without an efficient means of communication, some of the businesses thriving on its trading floors would not exist. Thus, making the switch from wired telephones to a wireless network was one the financial giant contemplated for a long time before giving Polycom the green light.

"The Polycom staff have proved to be an excellent group of people that understand what has to happen at the Exchange," said Crabtree. "We're pleased we chose them to deploy this system that is critical to us."

But finding the right system for such a demanding environment was far from easy. More than three years ago, Crabtree met with executives from some of the telecom industry's top wireless carriers, who attempted to propose wireless solutions for the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. Try as they might, their proposals were simply not feasible.

"Most of the issues surrounded the engineering. We didn't even get to the cost," Crabtree said.

The Exchange decided to build an in-house wireless network and started out with Ericsson technology.

"It's not that Ericsson wasn't good," Crabtree said. "We simply ran out of capacity because of frequency issues. We wanted Polycom to add more capacity and replace some of the Ericsson aging equipment. It's not a technology issue, but rather a frequency issue."

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Crabtree and other Exchange executives considered offering financial professionals on the trading floors cell phones, but he predicted, "the cell phone companies would hate us and we'd kill their network," because of their requirements for call capacity and reliability.

### **Running a Tight Floor**

In searching for an appropriate wireless telephone system, Crabtree also was looking for a wireless system that would allow him to control the class of service it gives its financial professionals on the trading floor, in order to satisfy unique requirements mandated by the Commodities and Futures Trading Commission. The financial regulatory body decrees that specific types of financial professionals have restricted or unrestricted use of their telephones. For example, some traders cannot legally speak to the public while others can.

"Polycom, along with SBC Centrex lines, allow us to control the access that the traders have in a very advanced fashion. Traders who only deal with their own money are allowed to make calls around the world, while brokers and traders working for firms are only allowed access throughout the range of the floor. With our new system, we are able to easily distinguish between these parties and regulate the calls accordingly."

Thus far, the demands of the trading floor environment are keeping the Exchange's telecommunications department busy, but Polycom's technology has been performing beyond their expectations.

"This is a highly managed system," said Crabtree. "We are always looking to optimize the system, and the activity level from people on the trading floors is such that you can just install a solution and forget about it. The SpectraLink system has been performing extremely well and we are very happy with the choice we made. It's exciting to provide this level of service to customers with such extraordinary needs."

