Company
Rockler, a Minnesota-based company, has been a family-owned business for over 60 years. They have retail stores nationwide, and are one of the largest online resources for woodworkers.

Industry
Retail

Challenges
• Too much time spent on managing day-to-day communication needs
• No time to work on forward-looking initiatives
• Too many vendors that “nickeled and dimed” on services and couldn’t determine monthly spend

Solution
• CCI managed and hosted VoIP cloud solution – Unified Communications
• MPLS network

Results
• Reduced day-to-day management of systems
• Reduced both up-front and ongoing capital outlay
• Cut monthly spend by $34,000
• One check for monthly telecommunication services
• Tripled data speed and increased security

The Challenge
When creative woodworkers need tools, materials, or plans, they turn to Rockler Woodworking and Hardware. The company’s catalog and 30 stores are the one-stop source for customers who demand quality products, great support, and reasonable prices. So when Jim Yothers, Rockler’s IT systems manager, was given responsibility for the company’s nationwide phone services and decided the company could do better, he was thinking like a Rockler customer. He described the situation to his manager and got a simple answer: “Fix it.”

“We were getting ‘nickeled and dimed’ on services and couldn’t even determine clearly what our spend was,” says Yothers. “Our stores are located across the U.S., and we were working with a variety of vendors. Our IT staff was spending so much time managing our day-to-day communication needs that we couldn’t focus on bigger company objectives. Our goal was to simplify processes, outsource some of the day-to-day systems management, and maximize our ROI.”

Yothers didn’t cut any corners in looking for a solution. He started out with 26 proposals from a variety of providers and integrators. “They proposed all kinds of solutions,” he says. “Our first step was to decide what kind of solution was right for our business, and that turned out to be CCI’s managed and hosted cloud offering. But this was just the beginning of the process. We identified the five top candidates and had all five come back with new proposals for the same solution that CCI had proposed. Comparing apples to apples in that final round, CCI provided the best implementation plan and earned our trust and our business.”

The CCI Solution
Rockler chose CCI’s cloud hosted VoIP solution over a premise-based system for several reasons. It significantly reduces the management time required by Rockler IT staff. This frees up IT resources to focus on other organizational goals and work on forward-looking initiatives. At the same time, the cloud solution reduces both up-front and ongoing capital outlay.

“The CCI solution integrated all of our stores through MPLS,” says Yothers. “We tripled our data speed, increased security, and got the out-dated PBX out of our facility. We got all new equipment across the country, from the network stack to the phones on the desks, and eliminated the need for firewalls in each of our stores. We write one check for monthly service instead of three or four in some of the other proposals. And we cut our monthly spend by $34,000 plus reduced our staff by one full-time employee.”

Positive Results
While Yothers noted there were “a few bumps” in dealing with the incumbent carrier during the nationwide rollout, the overall migration went very smoothly.

“CCI feels like a true partner,” he added. “It’s not like dealing with an integrator, who puts together a system and then leaves us to deal with multiple vendors. The Unified Communications cloud-based hosted VoIP service simplifies almost every aspect of our operation. CCI owns the technology, the signaling and provides the support, and we get everything we need in a nutshell for one monthly lease price. Best of all, we get flexibility, so the service expands or contracts with our business. Maybe we did it the hard way, starting with 26 proposals, but we came away knowing we made the right choice.”

— Jim Yothers, IT Systems Manager of Rockler

Consolidated Communications, Inc. (CCI) Delivers Nationwide Unified Communications Service to Rockler Stores Coast to Coast.