



Microsoft Office 365
Customer Solution Case Study



Customer: Veriown
Website: www.veriown.com
Customer Size: 36 employees
Country or Region: United States
Industry: Energy
Partner: SkyLite Systems
Website: www.skylitesystems.com

Customer Profile

Veriown Energy helps large organizations and governments—such as the University of the Virgin Islands—to harness their on-site energy sources.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Office 365
 - Microsoft Exchange Online
 - Microsoft Lync Online
 - Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus
 - Microsoft Office Online
 - Microsoft OneDrive for Business
 - Microsoft SharePoint Online

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Innovative energy company uses cloud-based productivity platform to generate business

"The big win for us is that we integrated almost all of our business functions through the Office 365 platform—and saved \$27,468 in IT costs."

Greg Staky, Director of Information Technology, Veriown Energy

Veriown Energy is building its business—installing on-site energy systems—with “zero-footprint” IT investments that reflect its passion for clean, sustainable energy. With Microsoft Office 365 and Office 365 apps, Veriown created an extensible business productivity platform that matches its startup work style—mobile, agile, and productive. And, by avoiding on-premises solutions and retiring third-party products, Veriown Energy saved US\$27,468.

In August 2013, a group of visionaries founded Veriown Energy. Working out of their homes, on the road, and in meetings all over the United States, they defined themselves as a “different type of energy company.” Although they generated interest among customers and investors in the potential of harnessing energy onsite—imagine turning rooftops and parking lots into modern, clean power plants—the founders also realized the benefits of a mobile, agile, always-on work style. So once things settled down enough for Veriown to open a head office in Chicago, the company wanted to standardize on a business productivity platform that supported the employees’ preferred way to work.

“We partner with engineering project construction companies to install electrical generation capabilities onsite so our customers can harness their very own energy,” says Greg Staky, Director of Information Technology at Veriown Energy. “Given our business, it made sense to choose cloud computing. We looked at Google, but it just didn’t impress us as an enterprise-ready set of capabilities. We have integrated almost all of our business functions with Microsoft Office 365—email, file sharing, real-time document editing, seamless collaboration with external partners, and videoconferencing. Now we have an extensible platform that’s become the foundation of our business.”



Have Office, Will Travel

Veriown sales representatives are on the road helping customers to go off-grid in locations across the United States. However, distance doesn't mean delays in collaborating to quickly close a deal. Sales representatives use Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus and SharePoint Online, web-based versions of Office applications, to work better as a virtual team and to co-author sales proposals in real time. Reps use Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus to install the latest version of Microsoft Office on up to five devices. They also store their documents in Microsoft OneDrive for Business online storage where they can be accessed and shared anywhere there's an Internet connection. The combination of these two capabilities gives sales reps almost ubiquitous access to their documents on any device.

"The business flows seamlessly because wherever we work, it's as if we are in our office with all our productivity tools at our fingertips," says Staky. "Project execution team members, who oversee the installation of on-site energy generation plants, use these capabilities to stay current with on-site developments by sharing and editing project-related documents from the job site and the office."

Receive PSTN Calls Anywhere on Any Device

Veriown wanted a less expensive alternative to an on-site telephone private automated branch exchange/private branch exchange environment. It is upgrading its Office 365 licenses to Office 365 Enterprise E4 and E1 and using a hosted Microsoft Lync Online to public switched telephone network (PSTN) service from Chinook Communications. Using this hosted solution, Veriown employees make and receive PSTN calls from their desktop, mobile device, or smartphone using one Lync number, anywhere they have Internet access. Voice mails are saved in Microsoft Outlook, so employees can see and respond to calls, even if they are nowhere near a phone.

Sales reps stay in touch with each other and the Chicago office using Lync Online videoconferencing and instant messaging.

"Lots of our staff are on the road, but to anyone calling, it appears as if they are always in the office," says Staky. "If I call someone on their work phone, it will deliver a voice mail message into the Outlook inbox and they can pick that up on their laptop, tablet, or smartphone because the service works on all the devices we carry with us. We avoided \$27,000 in a PBX solution and another \$468 by retiring our videoconferencing solution."

Drive Sales

Veriown liked how virtual sales and installation project teams gained efficiency by using collaboration sites hosted in Microsoft SharePoint Online. So when the company wanted additional customer relationship and project management capabilities for its employees, it chose the SideKick365 xRM app from SkyLite Systems that is built entirely in the SharePoint environment. Veriown found SideKick365 xRM in the SharePoint section of the Office App store.

"Instead of working with spreadsheets, we now manage our sales pipeline and analyze data using efficient online processes we customized in the SideKick365 xRM app," says Staky. "Then we created project tasks and alerts in the app that automate project management processes. SideKick365 xRM adds value for users on installation project team sites. Office 365 becomes an even more cost-effective, extensible business productivity platform when you take advantage of apps built for that environment."

Build the Business

Veriown relies on effective partnerships to generate business: with investors, research institutions, contractors, and engineering project construction (EPC) joint ventures. It

wanted to enrich these partnerships by enabling seamless collaboration with outside entities. It worked with SkyLite Systems to create a process to onboard external people and to assign appropriate access to corporate data, using the SideKick365 xRM app. "Now we can easily grant access to our collaboration sites without worrying about people seeing corporate information they shouldn't," says Staky. "We gain a dependable and scalable way to share information with the people we need to build our business, and our partners don't have to pay for the opportunity to work with us. It's a good deal for everyone."

Veriown invites consultants who bring along sales opportunities to join its customer relationship CRM site and the SideKick365 xRM app. It also invites EPC contractors onto project management sites so they can expedite Veriown construction projects and deliver better service. "We're a startup that's using Office 365 to build enterprise-grade, scalable, and repeatable business processes that exemplify best practices in our industry and conform to industry regulations, such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act," says Staky. "This is important, because we have always had the intention to take the company public. It's good to know we're ready whenever the opportunity comes along."