

## American Motorcycle Association Revs Up With ADIX

**T**he American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) is a private nonprofit organization that provides its 235,000 members nationwide with a range of benefits including discounts to sanctioned motorcycling events, insurance discounts, and a subscription to the third largest motorcycle publication in the country, *American Motorcyclist Magazine*. In addition, the group also has an active government lobbying organization that protects motorcyclists "right to ride" at national, state, and local levels. "Basically," says Wayne Gray, Director of Office Services, American Motorcyclist Association, "we are to motorcyclists, what the AAA is to automobile drivers or the NRA is to gun owners."

To meet its varied tasks and to fulfill the requirements of its members, the American Motorcyclist Association relies heavily on its telephone system. "One of the most critical tools in terms of meeting our day-to-day objectives," Gray says, "is the telephone because it creates a communications channel with our valued members." The telephone system the AMA relies on: an Iwatsu ADIX.


"We first implemented this solution over seven years ago," Gray recalls, "and it still meets all of our requirements because of the enhancements and processor upgrades provided by Iwatsu. In fact, since first implementing the system, the vendor has provided feature enhancements twice every year and has upgraded our CPU and processor speed four times. As a result, although our basic box has remained



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unchanged, our infrastructure is absolutely at the leading edge of telephony technology down to its 32-bit Motorola® processor."

The AMA originally selected this telephone system after a careful market search because it was the only solution that met all of their functional specifications. And equally important, the Iwatsu solution cost was about 35 percent lower than the closest competitor. "We liked the ADIX from the start because it was so scalable, providing unlimited growth potential in terms of both features and capacity," Gray says. "Plus its price was just unbeatable."

The ability to add features by upgrading software, not hardware, has been particularly beneficial to the AMA. "When we first implemented the 

system," Gray explains, "we only had analog lines. After a few years we decided to implement a T1 to improve access for members. This upgrade was made with minimal expense, in a short amount of time, and with no significant modifications to our hardware infrastructure. With other systems a complete forklift upgrade may have been needed."

The AMA plans to continue changing the configuration of their system in other ways as telephone automation features become more widely used. "When we first installed the system we expected to use the auto attendant on a limited basis," Gray says. "But, over time, the acceptance of automatic calling has increased amongst our members and we now see this capability as a way of meeting their needs faster, with less on-hold time. By leveraging the capabilities of the Iwatsu system and automating call handling, we maintain our existing staff size and keep member dues under control."

"In other words," he continues, "the Iwatsu system provides the flexibility to create the exact mix of automated call handling and live answering we need in a world of changing technology and evolving member needs."

One way the AMA is meeting its changing needs is by adding call answering groups to the ADIX ACD. Originally, only one such group was needed to answer membership inquiries. But, more recently, additional groups were added to respond to questions pertaining to professional racing events sanctioned by the AMA, and to help callers with inquiries about the AMA's motorcycle museum. Callers are routed to these groups by entering the appropriate menu selection when greeted by the auto attendant, with the option to speak with an operator.

"Our plan," Gray says, "is to add more auto attendant applications to offload operator-assisted calls and thereby leverage technology to enhance service for all members. With this system, we know that whatever our need, we can meet it."

That's why, when the AMA recently moved its headquarters, they decided to stay with the Iwatsu solution. "In our new facility," Gray says, "we were even able to enhance the solution to support a single, voice/data cabling infrastructure. As a result, adds, moves, and changes are a snap to implement. We have a single patch panel and if someone needs their telephone and PC moved from one location to another in the building, all I have to do is pull one cable loose and plug it in another spot."

Another change that the AMA made when moving was to make all of their voice communications fully Y2K compliant. (Note: Iwatsu's ADIX has always been Y2K compliant. He is referring to a non-Iwatsu voice mail system, or other type of third-party PC-based system.

One scenario is that he scrapped his non-Iwatsu, non-compliant voice mail system for Iwatsu's Y2K-compliant Omega-Voice VMI.) Implementing this software, however, was virtually transparent to Gray. "I generally have our Iwatsu distributor, Bell Haun (Westerville, OH) make whatever changes we request, or that they think we need," he says. "And most of these are done remotely, without my even knowing about it until the task is completed."

In addition to the system features, the AMA also appreciates the Iwatsu desktop telephone units. "We provided all of our staff with display telephones as an employee benefit to let them know we wanted them to have the best and easiest-to-use instruments," Gray says. "But these phones have also proven themselves very easy to maintain, offering an easy to comprehend diagnostic display that allows me to quickly resolve any issues that may arise. And, because the telephones function as dumb terminals to the switch, whenever we add features to the ADIX, they become available on the telephones. The bottom line: the phones never need to be replaced. In fact, we've been using the same telephones for the last seven years."

Another reason the AMA has been able to stay with the same telephone instruments for so many years is their durability. "I've seen handsets dropped from ridiculous locations and they just never fail," Gray says. "For example, in our mail services areas the phones have 24-foot cords so the staff can move around the room while talking. Sometimes they go just a little too far with the phone on their shoulders and the handsets fly clear across the room and bang, hop, and skip all the way back to the base unit as the cord recoils. The individual then chases it, picks it up, and continues talking because the handset always works."

Iwatsu telephones also provide the AMA with a wide selection of features that are invaluable to their business needs including one-touch speed dial, park and pickup, and busy number redial. For internal or intercom calls, the system also offers four-digit dialing, and if a line is busy, the system will redial an extension automatically until the line is free.

"What it comes down to is this," Gray says, "we selected the Iwatsu ADIX because we wanted a telephone system that was flexible, scalable, and cost-effective. Over the last seven years this solution has proven itself to be all that and more, allowing us to meet needs we never even anticipated when the system was first implemented. As a result, we're confident that the ADIX will continue to meet our requirements." 