



# CASE STUDY: Qwest<sup>®</sup> EZ Route





**Customer:**

ATA Airlines, Inc.  
www.ata.com

**Business Challenge:**

ATA Airlines needed to restructure its IT infrastructure to meet cost-containment objectives. Managers closed one call center and began migrating operations from a second center to an outsourced provider. The IT team needed a telecom vendor who could provide flexible call routing during a highly dynamic transition.

**Solution:**

The company utilized the Qwest® EZ Route service to direct call traffic to a new call center location in Florida. ATA managers used a web-based application to allocate call traffic loads and generate key reports.

**Benefits and Results:**

- Met goal of completing a smooth and economical call-center transition
- Reservation managers leveraged reports to make sound business decisions
- No-fee EZ Route software application saved thousands of dollars in fees other vendors would have charged to make routing changes
- Highly flexible call routing options facilitated changing time-of-day & day-of-week, schedules
- ATA managers utilized routing reports to enhance call center vendor productivity
- Qwest Control® allows monitoring of trunk loads to identify missed calls and to increase staffing during peak periods

## ATA AIRLINES, INC.

ATA Airlines (ATA) has been serving business, vacation and charter passengers for more than three decades. About 2,700 employees support the company's operations throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. With some 30 jets in its busy fleet, the company posted over a billion dollars in earnings in 2005.<sup>1</sup>

To thrive in today's highly competitive environment, the company developed a number of value-based services like advanced seat assignments and self-service kiosks. And while customers increasingly make use of online ticketing and flight information updates, ATA still maintains sizable call-center operations.

## FACING THE CHALLENGES

Following 9/11, many airlines suffered lingering financial stress. This motivated ATA executives to review their operations to find ways to cut costs. As a result, ATA's call center operations were targeted to be streamlined.

Decision makers elected to close one call center, and then migrate the remaining facility's Indianapolis operations to an outsourced vendor located in Florida. The transition was scheduled to take place gradually over six months. That would allow the new call center employees to be trained in waves while the veteran Indianapolis agents could continue to handle the bulk of the calls. As the new vendor's agents gained more experience, they would take on additional call traffic until the company was handling 100 percent of the calls.

In order to achieve this in a cost-effective manner, Kay Hlava, voice systems consultant for ATA Airlines, needed a flexible solution. "We needed a vendor that could provide 1-800 call routing while providing the means for us to make daily, if not hourly, changes to call traffic. Our initial inquiries raised concerns because the alternatives we considered would have charged us thousands of dollars to make the frequent changes that our business requires."

**"As far as EZ Route, that product was just so easy to use. The support personnel have all been helpful and knowledgeable and friendly. We call them so seldom that I don't have the number memorized, and most of the time I have all of our vendors' numbers memorized."**

**[from Customer service interview segment]**

**—Kay Hlava, Voice Systems Consultant, ATA Airlines**



## PROVIDING A SUCCESSFUL SOLUTION

After carefully considering several alternatives, Hlava selected the Qwest® EZ Route service. Incoming toll-free calls reached an ATA-configured voice menu. Users chose from a number of options, like "new reservations," or "Spanish speaking." Based on the option selected, the call was then routed to either the Indianapolis or Florida vendor location.

ATA personnel used Qwest's Web-enabled wizard to build call flows, menus and routing options. The application took multiple variables into account and gave Hlava the flexibility she needed to properly allocate calls. For example, she used the "percentage-allocation" feature to load balance calls so that new agents could slowly gain experience at the outsourced Florida facility. As their expertise grew, she increased the percentage of calls they took.

Because the Florida days and operating hours varied on a weekly basis, Hlava configured EZ Route to account for these variables: "We used quite a few features within EZ Route to route calls between call centers at different times of the day and different days of the week."

## DELIVERING RESULTS

### COST EFFECTIVE

Because the Qwest® EZ Route solution uses Qwest's infrastructure, ATA did not need to make any capital investments to implement the application.

Additionally, the Qwest EZ Route solution gave ATA managers a flexible tool to meet their call center needs. Whereas alternative vendors would have charged Hlava to make the necessary daily routing changes, the Qwest solution proved economical. "Just the cost savings alone were amazing," said Hlava. "And it was going to cost us thousands of dollars for those daily changes that we might have had to make."

### EFFICIENT & FAST

The EZ Route solution gives ATA managers visibility into their communications operations to improve decision making. "I think that the most important benefit that I've gotten is that it makes me look like a superstar to my [internal] customers," stated Hlava. "I can run reports quickly and give our reservations folks the information that they need to make the right business decisions."

Hlava also made good use of Qwest's trunk utilization reports. "A couple of times when we've had some bad weather recently, you can watch and we know the call centers are being bombarded," explained Hlava. "But if the calls are overloading our trunks, we can't see that except on Qwest reports."

Moreover, the flexibility of the EZ Route software allows ATA managers to change routing options in real time. This helps the company to better handle call traffic spikes caused by weather and promotional advertisements among other things.

