

Power to the people

- **Business needs** - This electric power utility group needed to eliminate telecommunications overlaps, upgrade services, and consolidate vendors.
- **Networking solution** - AT&T Phone for Business – Advanced, AT&T Dedicated Internet, and AT&T Business Fiber® enhanced and simplified business processes.
- **Business value** - Improved operations, streamlined billing
- **Industry focus** - Nonprofit utility
- **Size** - Approx. 175 employees that support 49 participant community cities in Georgia

About MEAG Power

The Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG Power) is a nonprofit, statewide electricity generation and transmission organization. It is recognized as one of the leading joint action agencies in the country. (A joint action agency is an organization formed by groups of community-owned utilities.) MEAG Power is among the top public power companies nationwide in terms of annual net generation, megawatt-hour sales, and electric revenue.

The situation

In the four decades since its founding, MEAG Power's telecommunications infrastructure had multiplied significantly. As the organization grew, it added telephone lines for voice services, building access, elevators, and alarms. Billing and account management was complicated because the services came from several vendors. The Georgia power agency needed to identify all its telecom accounts, eliminate overlaps, and upgrade services wherever needed.

Solution

AT&T Business helped to streamline and upgrade MEAG Power's services and simplify billing. The cornerstone of its new services was AT&T Phone for Business – Advanced, a cloud-based solution that converts traditional analog landline signals to Internet Protocol (IP), delivering Voice over IP (VoIP) internet connections. The solution supports basic voice and specialty data lines that enable FAX, alarm, access control gates, and elevator communication services. MEAG Power also added AT&T Dedicated Internet, AT&T Business Fiber®, and Business Wi-Fi to augment its ability to satisfy its customers.

Serving the needs of public power communities

The Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia, known as MEAG Power, was created by the Georgia General Assembly in 1975 to provide reliable, competitive, wholesale electricity to the 49 member communities that own and operate their local electric distribution systems.

MEAG Power also monitors and advocates on energy issues at the state and federal levels on behalf of its participants. As a non-profit joint action agency, MEAG Power is solely focused on serving the needs of its public power communities.

The agency's diverse, clean energy portfolio—delivering 66% emissions-free energy in a recent year—compares favorably with state and national averages.

Constraining vendor services

Daniel Williams, Corporate Facilities Manager for MEAG Power, is responsible for the building's security, maintenance, and operations. He describes the job as a combination of building engineer, property manager, and operations director. His duties involve dealing with several dozen vendors that provide a wide range of services to MEAG Power.

"The facilities manager is responsible for controlling and constraining the use of vendor services to keep everything within our budget," Williams said. This job was complicated by the fact that MEAG Power had multiple accounts with many of its vendors.

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Daniel Williams
Corporate Facilities Manager
MEAG Power



Williams started his job during the pandemic, which meant he had little time to work with his predecessor. “The handoff I got was very minimal just because of the transition time,” he said. He set out to combine and simplify the vendor contracts to save money and operate more efficiently for the citizens of Georgia.

Organization and control

As he worked his way through the vendor accounts, Williams began to scrutinize the telecommunications services that MEAG Power uses. He understood that the services performed vital functions such as supporting security alarms, access control gates, and emergency communications in elevators.

“AT&T has great services. I use them as well for my personal home account, so I know they have reliable service, and they provide good customer care.”

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However, because the services had been ordered at different times over 40+ years, there were multiple accounts with several carriers. “We had bills from third-party resellers. We had old, grandfathered accounts, which read as Southwestern Bell, and we had updated AT&T accounts,” Williams said. “There was a lot going on, so I wanted to reach out to kind of get some organization and control over everything.”

Williams contacted an AT&T Business account

representative to help him determine which services needed to be upgraded or eliminated, and to streamline the bills MEAG Power receives.

Simplicity and strength

Williams’s account representative from AT&T Business began working with Williams to simplify and strengthen the agency’s telecommunications services. “We got together, and he started reaching out consistently, and became my point of contact,” Williams said.

MEAG Power’s telecommunications bills were voluminous. Working with his AT&T Business rep, Williams found 13 different telecommunications accounts from a variety of vendors.

“The bills totaled around \$9,000 a month,” Williams said. “For a company this size, that’s way too extreme. So, we had to get that condensed and whittled down.” His account executive proved to be a big help. “He and I had to go through the weeds on everything.”

Williams added: “Anytime you go through a transition, things can get lost in translation or fall by the wayside. I didn’t have the luxury of sitting behind somebody and learning. I had to kind of hit the ground running. I had to figure out the most effective way to make things easier on our end as well as make things make sense.”

Saving money, increasing redundancy

AT&T Business helped MEAG Power combine some services, eliminate a few, and upgrade several more. The account representative found ways to save money on multiple elevator lines that were being billed

separately and at expensive tariff rates.

Williams's account representative suggested adding AT&T Phone for Business – Advanced. The cloud-based solution converts traditional analog landline signals to VoIP internet connections. The solution supports special data lines, enabling fax, alarm, access gate, and elevator communications.

Instead of having multiple dedicated lines that are connected to a traditional telephone network, MEAG Power's analog voice and specialty data lines are connected to a device that converts the analog signal to digital by moving traffic from copper into the cloud while keeping business-critical connections intact.

Upgraded services at a discounted price

AT&T Phone for Business – Advanced helped MEAG Power save money and enjoy enhanced services. MEAG didn't stop there. It now relies on the steady, reliable speed and performance of AT&T Business Fiber.

The company also chose AT&T Dedicated Internet to connect its SIP and PRI trunks to the regional telephone network. This dedicated connection ensures MEAG maintains bandwidth and supports call quality requirements through AT&T Dedicated Internet's industry-leading SLAs.

AT&T Dedicated Internet further simplifies network management by consolidating voice and data to optimize network capacity and control costs. The service also has wireless backup to keep businesses online. "Our service provides two separate connections for the VoIP lines, so if one goes down the other side picks up the connection," Williams said.

"I'd also tell colleagues to stick with their AT&T Business account manager and learn as much as you can, because that's your point person who can help you make sure that your building has success."

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To provide Wi-Fi for guests at one of MEAG Power's regional conference and training centers, the company chose AT&T Business Wi-Fi. The solution provides comprehensive security, networking, and application control to the company's network.

AT&T Business helped simplify the deployment of MEAG Power's new services, and Williams said he is pleased with the progress he and his account rep have made in streamlining billing. "He just walked me through the historical context of each account," Williams said. "He was a great partner. We made tremendous progress in getting down to the most efficient cost and fewest number of accounts."

Furthermore, Williams and his AT&T Business rep have been able to combine many of the existing accounts. "Thanks to AT&T Business, we've gone from 13 separate accounts to just four master accounts," Williams said. "Plus, we've eliminated the resellers." He believes these moves will save MEAG Power several thousand dollars each month.

Equally important, Williams's AT&T Business account rep has become a valued resource for MEAG Power.

“He has been able to effectively walk me through stuff that I’m not educated on, so I can understand it and educate my higher-ups,” Williams said. “My rep has also been a liaison with AT&T contractors and his colleagues that work in other departments.”

Williams values the mutually beneficial relationship between MEAG and AT&T Business. “I’m pretty sure I helped my rep reach his KPIs [key performance indicators], and he’s helped me meet some of mine, including cost savings. He also helped with our United Way campaign, which was a great morale booster for our employees. It helps AT&T Business stay visible to my internal customers, so it’s a good relationship and a win-win.”

Reliability, customer care

Williams said he would advise facilities managers to find a point person for each vendor with whom they deal and get to know the person. “It really helped in a situation like mine where there were resellers and multiple, grandfathered accounts, and I’m walking in blind,” he said. “Our AT&T Business account rep was able to help me decipher everything.”

Williams would also advise peers to consider AT&T Business. “I would tell them that AT&T has great services. I use them as well for my personal home account, so I know they have reliable service, and they provide good customer care.”



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Williams concluded: “I’d also tell colleagues to stick with their AT&T Business account manager and learn as much as you can, because that’s your point person who can help you make sure that your building has success.”