

real life

A STORY FROM THE FRONT LINES OF POWER PROTECTION

The efficient and cost-effective flow of information for over 230 CompUSA stores is the heartbeat of maintaining a profitable bottom line for this retail giant. The transfer of erratic or corrupted information cannot be tolerated in the competitive electronics market and ONEAC helps prevent these problems from occurring at CompUSA.

CompUSA Achieves Maximum Uptime with ONEAC

CompUSA Inc., headquartered in Dallas, Texas, is the nation's leading retailer and reseller of personal computer-related products and services. With approximately 230 stores in 90 major metropolitan markets, CompUSA superstores provide sales, technical service and training to retail, corporate, government and education customers nationwide.

The Problem:

"When I joined CompUSA, as telecom manager, 10 years ago, there were 55 stores and we had a hodge-podge of Nortel, Executone and AT&T phone equipment installed. Even

though these phone systems were equipped with a UPS, we still had lots of trouble calls," states Ken Monroe, Director of IT Communications and Support Services for CompUSA. Ken immediately suspected the trouble calls may have something to do with power quality.

The Search:

Ken was all too familiar with the problems that noise on the AC line could cause PBX systems. Before coming to CompUSA, he was directly involved in PBX field trials that ONEAC conducted with his previous employer. During



COMPUSA®

these field trials at their "known trouble sites," they experienced an 85-90% improvement in PBX operation when an ONEAC Power Conditioner or Power Conditioned UPS was placed between the PBX equipment and the AC power outlet. As a result of these trials, this leading equipment manufacturer began recommending ONEAC with every PBX they sold. The key to improved system performance was power conditioning, which virtually removed the transient noise from the AC power line.

CompUSA's phone systems were already equipped with a UPS that provided battery back-up for occasional power outages, but they didn't provide the power conditioning necessary to combat everyday high-frequency interference, which is less dramatic, but can be equally devastating. High-frequency interference can be

caused by utility grid-switching as well as elevators, HVAC units, copiers and other equipment connected to building power lines. These constant power line disturbances can cause system lock-ups, hardware damage and component failure. "Every minute that we're down, costs us money," stated Ken.

Another problem with the installed UPSs was that the systems had to be taken out of service, at night when the store was closed, for a technician to change the UPS batteries when they expired. It was such a cumbersome process, that instead of ordering replacement batteries, they would just replace the entire UPS. A process that became far too costly to continue.

The Solution:

CompUSA standardized on Nortel for phone systems in all its stores. Because of Ken's

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*Ken Monroe,
Director of IT Communications and Support Services
CompUSA*

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“Once the ONEACs were installed, our maintenance failure rate went down dramatically.”

*Ken Monroe,
Director of IT Communications
and Support Services
CompUSA*

previous experience with ONEAC, he was convinced CompUSA should also standardize on the ONEAC ON Series® UPS to protect each phone system. “Once the ONEACs were installed, our maintenance failure rate went down dramatically,” stated Ken.

A few years later, the stores began to have problems with their RISC servers — lock-ups, hardware failures and somewhat frequent power outages. According to Ken, “When we installed the ONEAC ON2000 rack mount UPS on the RISC servers in each store, we experienced the same positive results we had with the PBX equipment.” He went on to say, “The ONEAC gave us 30 minutes of runtime. Most outages are not more than 10-15 minutes so we could stay online with the phone systems and the RISC boxes during an outage.”

CompUSA also had other store equipment protected by the old UPSs. Approximately 9-12 months ago, they started switching those old UPSs to ONEAC Power Conditioned UPSs. “In the near future, all store equipment that needs protection will be protected by ONEAC. And battery replacement is so easy. Our technicians can now do on-site, hot-swap battery replacement,” said Ken. He added, “ONEAC batteries last on average, 4 to 5 years! The batteries in our previous UPSs only lasted 18-24 months.”

CompUSA operates a Network Operations (NetOpps) Center at their corporate headquarters in Dallas where they monitor their systems in all 230 stores, 24x7. ONEAC’s UPS software and network interface card enables NetOpps to remotely monitor the UPSs, receive event messaging, respond to faults, perform remote management, and initiate a

controlled shutdown if necessary. Often times, diagnosing and solving problems with only a few mouse clicks instead of dispatching a service technician.

CompUSA has grown to over 230 stores across the U.S. and under Ken Monroe’s direction, has recently undergone a major technology upgrade to its LAN/WAN infrastructure and has added Wi-Fi within the stores to support stand-alone vendor kiosks and other wireless applications. Ken’s project teams are also systematically replacing their Nortel PBXs with Mitel’s ICP 3300 voice over IP (VoIP) systems in each store. “ONEAC rack mount UPSs are now protecting our backbone equipment, switches, routers, POS controllers, RISC servers, VoIP and PBX systems... let’s just say that everything that is our “heartbeat” is protected by ONEAC,” said Ken.



The ONEAC Difference

It’s well established that power problems are the leading cause of network downtime and data loss. Lightning and outages are the most visible of these. And most power protection products protect against them to some degree. But fast-edged transients and other conducted noise can be just as dangerous. ONEAC’s low-impedance, full output isolation transformers eliminate them completely, while most products are only capable of protecting against a portion. That difference can have a major impact on reliability.

The evidence shows that switching from standard filter-based protection to ONEAC leads to an average 35 percent reduction in hard failures, 80 percent reduction in “no trouble found” service calls and equally dramatic reductions in a host of other mysterious system ills.

The cost of ONEAC protection is a small fraction of your total investment in electronic systems and support. Doesn’t it make more sense to specify the one that offers you complete power protection?

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