Sensaphone® uses AT&T Global SIMs to provide connectivity to help safeguard costly assets

Business Needs

Solutions to help customers protect their assets, including vacation homes, food manufacturing facilities, medical cold storage, greenhouses, and data centers

Networking solution

AT&T Global SIMs deliver worldwide, end-to-end connectivity for remote monitoring devices.

Business value

Highly reliable technology helps support Sensaphone's ability to inform customers of any problems.

Industry focus

Remote environmental monitoring

Size

500,000 Sensaphone systems in use globally

About Sensaphone®

Sensaphone designs and builds remote environmental monitoring systems and early detection products that quickly and effectively deliver alerts when problems arise. More than 500,000 Sensaphone systems are in use today around the world, with the highest customer satisfaction rates in the industry.

The situation

Customers trust Sensaphone to help protect their valuable assets. The company's ability to perform its vital environmental monitoring and early detection services required strong and dependable connectivity.

Solution

AT&T Global SIMs automatically and remotely connect Sensaphone devices, providing worldwide, end-to-end connectivity. The AT&T Control Center gives Sensaphone the ability to deploy and manage its devices with advanced diagnostic tools and smart process automation.

Early detection is vital

Companies in many industries choose Sensaphone environmental monitoring and early detection systems to help protect their assets. Customers include data centers, water treatment plants, oil and gas operations, medical cold storage, greenhouses, livestock ranches, food and beverage storage providers, HVAC companies, and environmental remediation firms.

The company was founded in 1985 by the late Ken Blanchard. He was a visionary who realized the potential of the remote monitoring concept while working as general manager of Advanced Development and Engineering for a multinational conglomerate. His daughter Laura Blanchard, now Sensaphone's president, said he came up with his first remote monitoring system while trying to solve a personal challenge—his boats kept sinking. Twice in the same year, his unattended boat sank while docked in Somers Point, New Jersey.

"When a boat takes on water, the bilge pump is supposed to kick on. This wasn't happening," she said. "My father set out to invent something that would alert him when the boat began taking on water."

The original Sensaphone application for boats never caught on, but Ken Blanchard saw that it could work well in many other applications. While the industries that rely on Sensaphone are quite different, most need to watch the same variables. "The main things that our customers monitor are temperature, power, water leaks, and humidity. And of course, we have expanded from there, but you'd be amazed at how much overlap there is among industries," Laura Blanchard said.

Ken Blanchard passed away a decade ago, but his daughter and the team he built at Sensaphone continue to innovate to help their customers succeed.

Protection for valuable commodities

"Ensuring that medical supplies can be transported and stored safely is vital," Laura Blanchard said. "We do a lot with vaccine monitoring because they require very cold temperatures, or they'll go bad. For agriculture, we make sure the ventilation system is running because if it goes down, a farmer can lose all his pigs or chickens within a matter of minutes," she said. "It's the same with greenhouses—they need to be kept at a certain temperature or the plants can be lost."

Sensaphone monitors data centers to make sure servers are up and running with no power disruptions.

The company helps wastewater treatment plants keep watch so tanks don't overflow. Individuals trust Sensaphone to monitor cabins or vacation homes to make sure heat is maintained to keep pipes from freezing.

Today, more than 500,000 Sensaphone systems have been installed worldwide. "We have resellers in pretty much every country except Russia," Blanchard said. Sensaphone has the highest customer satisfaction rates in the industry. It's also one of the few electronics companies still manufacturing in the United States.

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> Dave DeFusco
> **Vice President of Engineering**
> **Sensaphone**

Remote access to information

Sensaphone's original notification system used landlines. Dave DeFusco, Sensaphone Vice President of Engineering, said the company was a pioneer in using digital speech technology. "Our devices had keypads that enabled customers to program them with the phone numbers to call with alerts using synthesized voice," he said. "For many years, that's how our devices worked."

Sensaphone now communicates with phone lines, Ethernet, cellular, and satellite connectivity, providing customers remote access to critical information and enabling quick and easy changes. Most Sensaphone products communicate directly, with no dependency on computers, servers, or a central service.

A web portal and mobile app enable customers to log in, create an account, and set up their own sensors. They can create custom notifications that will instantly alert them via phone, e-mail, text message, fax, or SNMP (Simple Network Management Protocol), an internet standard protocol for collecting and organizing information about managed devices on internet protocol (IP) networks. Sensaphone devices include battery backup, so they continue to work during power outages.

Customers appreciate the simple setup and programming for Sensaphone devices and the lack of monthly fees on most products, unlike typical security systems that require monthly payments.

Coverage is priority one

While Sensaphone initially purchased AT&T services through a reseller, it eventually decided to contract with AT&T directly. "We got better pricing, we got better service, and a better website," he said.

The AT&T Control Center gives Sensaphone the ability to deploy and manage its devices with advanced diagnostic tools and smart process automation. Sensaphone uses the AT&T Control Center to purchase SIMs and activate or deactivate them. "We use the Control Center's diagnostic and spotlight features, which are very useful and reliable. We have no complaints," he said.

Working with AT&T Business makes it easier to provide service to customers off the beaten path. "A lot of our devices end up in the middle of nowhere, so coverage is priority one, which is another reason we're with AT&T."

Blanchard has told colleagues about her positive experience with AT&T Business services. "It just goes back to reliability. Sensaphone is known for having reliable products, and AT&T is known for having reliable coverage," she said.

DeFusco also likes working with AT&T Business. "The relationship has been very smooth, and our account rep got us going quickly. I have no problems recommending AT&T."

Faith in the network

Blanchard said Sensaphone and its customers take comfort in working with AT&T Business. "Our customers recognize the good reputation AT&T has earned, and they have faith in us because we're using AT&T," she said.

Sales of Sensaphone's cellular products now outpace the sales of their other products, so the company is working on several prototypes to replace some devices and increase business in its lower cost product line.

DeFusco said Sensaphone has been using packaged modems from other companies. "This time we designed in a cellular module and put it on our board, which allowed us to reduce product size and reduce costs," DeFusco said. "And it's going well. We have a couple of AT&T SIMs in the prototypes, and we're looking forward to releasing them in the near future." The company plans to use the AT&T LTE-M network to help enhance device coverage and lower power consumption for the devices.

In the tradition of company founder Ken Blanchard, Sensaphone staff said they'll continue to advance technology innovations that protect organizations and individuals throughout the world.

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