

The San Diego Symphony

The San Diego Symphony, one of California's leading cultural organizations, uses RingCX to deliver outstanding caller experiences to hundreds of thousands of patrons each year, achieving a 95% decrease in hold time for box office agents.



sandiegosymphony.org

INDUSTRY

Sports & Entertainment

REGION

Americas

COMPANY SIZE

100–399

PRODUCTS USED

**Customer Experiences,
Business Communications**

8x

savings using RingCX to eliminate third-party call centers for overflow

95%

decrease in hold time after deploying RingCX for box office agents

3x

increase in efficiency and business insights with RingEX and RingCX



“Since we replaced our legacy system with RingCX for box office operations, all the feedback I’ve seen and heard tells the same story: the quality of the call experience, for both our agents and our patrons, has gone up exponentially.”

Sean Kennedy
IT Director

One of California's most significant cultural institutions

It would be difficult to imagine a performing arts organization that has had a greater cultural impact on its community—or music in general—than the San Diego Symphony. Operating continuously since 1910, the symphony performs for more than 250,000 people each year, drawing music lovers from all over the world to its 120+ live concerts annually. With a commitment to introducing young people to the power of music, the symphony also provides educational opportunities for tens of thousands of K-12 students every year. One of the symphony's composers-in-residence has even won the Pulitzer Prize for Music. Never resting on its laurels, the organization continues to innovate and expand its capabilities and reach. In 2021, the symphony opened its second location, The Rady Shell, on San Diego's waterfront. More recently, the symphony completed a \$125 million renovation of its original indoor hall, now called the Jacobs Music Center.

A legacy phone system increasingly striking a wrong note

Sean Kennedy, IT Director for the San Diego Symphony, explains that for several years before he joined, the organization operated with a legacy phone infrastructure. “The old system was far from ideal. We were dependent on the provider to spin up new lines and to make even the smallest admin changes. Plus, the call-quality reporting was basically nonexistent, so I had no visibility into what was working and what wasn't.” Kennedy adds that eventually, several factors taxed the legacy infrastructure beyond its limits. “It was difficult enough when we had just one facility, the main symphony hall. But when we added our new waterfront location, The Rady Shell, communications just became too fragmented and complicated.” Another challenge, Kennedy points out, was the system's lack of flexibility, which created more customer-service difficulties as the second location led to increases in box-office call volume. “If we add shows from a big act, we might want to open the box office a couple hours early to accommodate the demand, but we didn't have that flexibility with the old system. So we had to rely on the provider, which often broke things when they made those changes for us.” The result of these legacy-telephony shortcomings,

Kennedy says, was that the symphony's box office agents couldn't always deliver the high-quality phone experience they aimed for. “When patrons contacted us with questions about tickets, parking, or seating options, long hold times or unreliable phone service could dampen their excitement and leave them feeling frustrated.” For the San Diego Symphony, these moments are critical. A dependable and flexible phone system not only resolves inquiries efficiently but also builds trust and excitement, ensuring patrons feel valued before they even arrive. It sets the stage for an extraordinary evening, where anticipation transforms into an unforgettable experience. As Kennedy explains, the \$125 million renovation of the organization's main location, the Jacobs Music Center, provided the perfect opportunity to rethink their entire communications infrastructure. And as a RingCentral user in his previous IT role, Kennedy knew he had the answer.

RingEX: unifying two locations under one communications roof

Kennedy began rolling out the unified communications platform RingEX for several departments across the San Diego Symphony, to improve their workflows, help them stay accessible to customers and donors, and enhance their external communications in other ways as well. For example, Kennedy notes, the symphony's marketing department and venue operations team use RingEX and the RingCentral mobile app when working with vendors and partners, such as print and audio production companies and local media outlets, to ensure each event runs smoothly and provides the best guest experience possible. He also points out another RingEX use case that has proven invaluable for the organization's fundraising operation.

“One of the best things about using RingEX is that it lets our fundraising professionals, like our gift officers and annual fund managers, make and receive calls from anywhere on their business lines. In the past, these people have typically used their personal cell numbers because it was more convenient to talk with donors on their cell phones. But with the RingCentral app, they can now have those calls on their personal phones but still use their familiar symphony numbers.”



RingCX gives us several capabilities we couldn't offer before: the option to get a callback, to leave a voicemail, even to listen to FAQs rather than wait for an agent. We're delivering a better patron experience than ever.

Sean Kennedy, IT Director

RingCX: a box-office phone solution worthy of a world-class symphony

At the same time the organization rolled out RingEX, they also began migrating the box-office operation onto the RingCX contact center solution. And since the RingCX rollout, Kennedy says, the San Diego Symphony has improved its workflow efficiencies in several ways. "One big improvement is that because the RingCX admin dashboard is so intuitive, either I or even our box-office leadership team can easily update the system's rules, call queues, directories, and other details ourselves—no waiting for a provider." As Kennedy also explains, "Our leadership team takes advantage of RingCX's reporting and analytics data to monitor our agents' performance—things like average hold time and average handle time—so they can identify issues quickly and help those agents improve." Additionally, Kennedy notes, deploying RingCX has led to quantifiable improvements in several of the box-office team's most important metrics.



When we analyze the data from RingCX's supervisor dashboard, we're seeing big increases in both technical KPIs, such as network uptime and performance KPIs. And these aren't just short-term boosts. I've observed these improvements consistently over the past six months.

Sean Kennedy, IT Director

Kennedy adds that deploying RingCX helped resolve one of the most frustrating challenges the box-office team had faced with the previous system. "Believe it or not, there was a glitch in the old system where in times of high call volume some callers on hold would get shuffled back and forth between the main queue to a holding area and back before reaching a live agent. Sometimes these hold times could last as long as four hours. When we rolled out RingCX, that problem disappeared immediately, and we've never had a hold-time issue since."



Our legacy system could leave a caller on hold for four hours. With RingCX, even during times with high call volume, nobody waits for more than 10 minutes. That's a 95% decrease in hold time.

Sean Kennedy, IT Director

From a workflow standpoint, RingCX brings several key features that allow the box-office team to run more efficiently than ever. "Now that we have the callback feature, the leave-a-voicemail option, and an option for callers to listen to recorded FAQs rather than wait on hold, we've essentially gotten our abandon rate down to nothing. Our patrons are now reaching agents quickly or, just as quickly, finding answers to their questions without even waiting to speak to an agent. That's the outstanding service our patrons deserve."



If we had added our massive new concert location and not upgraded our phones, our box-office team would be feeling the pressure. But RingCX makes it so easy to handle and route calls that our agents are in fact thriving.

Sean Kennedy, IT Director

A smooth, disruption-free implementation

While he was prepared for some operational hiccups, which are common in most major IT migrations, Kennedy was surprised at how smooth and painless the RingCentral rollout proved to be. "The whole deployment turned out to be a very easy and quick lift," he says. "Our teams were able to hit the ground running, in part thanks to the intuitiveness of the RingCentral platform itself but also thanks to the training and implementation help we received from RingCentral's professional services teams."



RingCentral does a wonderful job of putting an implementation team in place to help. We were always able to reach those folks and get the support we needed, which helped us get deployed within a couple of weeks.

Sean Kennedy, IT Director

Lowering telecom costs with RingCentral

Although it wasn't a primary goal for the organization, Kennedy notes that migrating to the RingCentral platform—and particularly to RingCX—has helped the San Diego Symphony cut significant telecommunication costs.

"With the old system, we had to pay a third-party call center for overflow when volume got too high for our box-office team. Because our old system offered no real reporting, I couldn't be sure how many calls we were sending to that company—or if they were charging us the right amount."

"When we switched to RingCX, I could see for the first time exactly how many calls we were shipping to the call center. It was costing us a fortune. At the same time, RingCX was making our internal team so much more efficient that I didn't think we needed that overflow service anymore. I pulled together a report showing that our agents were handling calls more efficiently than ever, and the leadership team agreed. So we canceled that contract—saving many thousands of dollars a month."



By allowing us to eliminate a costly contract for call-overflow services, RingCX saves us about 8x our old costs during peak-volume times. And that's just one way RingCentral saves us money.

Sean Kennedy, IT Director

Partnering with RingCentral to integrate key workflows

The San Diego Symphony has been so pleased with what RingCentral has done for its early-adopter departments that Kennedy's team is now advocating the solution's benefits to the rest of the organization. "RingCentral has definitely proven itself capable of improving workflow efficiencies and the caller experience for our guests and staff," he says. "So my big objective now is to sing the praises of RingEX and the RingCentral app across the organization, to drive adoption among every team, because I've seen firsthand what it can do for them." Looking to the future, Kennedy is also planning to integrate RingCentral with more of the organization's workflow applications. "I know we can create efficiencies and add more capabilities for our staff by integrating RingEX and RingCX into some of our standard productivity tools, or even finding new tools now that we know RingCentral can integrate with them either directly or through APIs. Over time, I think those types of integrations will also enhance our operations."



From the feedback I'm hearing from our teams using RingCX and RingEX, they're easily experiencing a 3x increase in value from the added efficiencies and business intelligence RingCentral gives them.

Sean Kennedy, IT Director