



ZEN HQ™

PRIME COMMUNICATIONS- AT&T

Prime Communications is the largest, privately-held AT&T Authorized Retailer. Headquartered in Sugar Land, Texas, Prime Communications has nearly 2,000 locations across the nation and employs over 7,000 employees.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

To provide a comfortable experience across all of the Prime Communications stores, their HVAC units were constantly running, whether employees were changing the temperature to make it cooler/warmer in the stores to the units being left on when the store was not occupied. The utility bills were high and made up a large portion of their operating expenses.

Without an energy management system in place, all energy control was at the store level which meant store managers simply had to 'remember to check' daily that everything was turned off or set correctly before they closed up each night— an extra responsibility that was often forgotten.

Leaving the HVAC systems running adds unnecessary wear and tear on the units and can result in system failures and hefty maintenance bill. They needed a simple way to take control of their HVAC systems across their entire portfolio.

Like most commercial customers, when hearing the words “energy management”, they thought it would be inconvenient and that it would cost a pretty penny with a slow ROI to incorporate a new system.

With thousands of locations across North America, Prime Communications needed:

- visibility and HVAC control across their entire portfolio
- a way to reduce/prevent thermostat tampering
- the ability to ensure that the HVAC system is not running when the store is not occupied
- an energy management solution to significantly reduce energy usage and costs
- a solution that was not expensive to implement and had a fast payback



THE ZEN HQ SOLUTION

Zen HQ was implemented nation-wide with a total of 1,969 sites with 2,306 thermostats installed throughout.

Zen HQ enabled Prime Communications to define schedules at a national, regional and site level to effectively manage HVAC usage and included lockout controls to prevent on-site deviations from schedules. Management could view heating, cooling, and energy usage in dynamic visual graphs in Zen HQ to monitor usage and consumption more easily.

Thermostat lockouts

Zen HQ's partial lockout feature allowed employees to make alterations to store temperatures at the thermostat with a pre-set range for a pre-set time defined by Prime. This meant that if a minor temperature alteration was required due to a change in weather, employees were able to make the change quickly to ensure customer comfort while giving the Prime the confidence that units would not run unnecessarily.

Remote thermostat monitoring

With Zen HQ, Prime Communications is able to log in to the portal to view real-time thermostat status, including any thermostats that have been overridden by employees or are not heating/cooling to the set standard. This allows Prime to proactively identify whether there are issues with employee or customer comfort, in which stores overrides are being applied most frequently and which HVAC units may require maintenance – all before costly electric bills or mechanical issues occur.

Thermostat grouping & scheduling

Zen HQ allows for thermostat grouping, which enabled them to group together thermostats by function and implement different schedules applicable to the front or back room respectively. This means that when there is a change to operating hours, the entire group of thermostats can be adjusted remotely with just a few clicks – an enormous time saving over requiring visits to each location to program thermostats in person.

For more information about Zen Ecosystems and Zen HQ, visit zenecosystems.com.

We saved over 30% on our energy bills by switching to Zen! The Zen HQ platform is easy to use – we are able to set the schedule and forget it. We do not have to worry about stores leaving the HVAC system running overnight or if employees are changing the temperature. Zen keeps us comfy in the winter and our wallets cool in the summer.

Othniel King
Director of Operations
Prime Communications

Prime Communications & Zen HQ results

- Management now has control and greater insight into energy usage and costs
- Demand Response program participation has led to new revenue streams for the business
- Fast ROI

