

TELECOMMUNICATIONS SUCCESS STORY

Allied Telesis Improves Customer Service with ShoreTel

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Keith Hoult
Managing Director, Allied Telesis

Allied Telesis, a leader and innovator in telecommunications equipment, strives to ensure that all facets of its business reflect and support its brand. Communication is key to Allied's success, but increasingly staff were struggling to ensure that customer inquiries were dealt with quickly and effectively. The company's legacy telephone system limited its ability to provide the best possible customer experience.

Allied's legacy system could not facilitate additional ports for new users and basic configurations required the aid of an engineer, which proved both costly and time consuming. With no in-house control capabilities, Allied had lost control of its system. The company was looking for a system that could grow alongside the business, and allows changes to be implemented in house, without the need for specific technical knowledge or expensive staff training.

Furthermore, Allied desperately needed a voicemail system – the company risked losing potential business as users were unable to retrace missed calls. The ShoreTel Voice Switch 90v supports integrated voicemail capability with 56 hours of voicemail storage, ensuring Allied staff never miss a call. Voicemails can be accessed locally, using a telephone, PC or remotely via telephone or computer connections, ensuring users can follow-up with caller, irrespective of the user's location.

COMPANY PROFILE:

For more than 20 years, Allied Telesis has been a leading provider of networking infrastructure. Today the Company delivers data, voice, and video services to a variety of clients globally. Allied Telesis is committed to innovating the way in which services and applications are delivered and managed, resulting in increased value and lower operating costs.

CHALLENGE:

- Allied Telesis' ageing telephone system was unable to facilitate additional ports for new users, failed to integrate users across departments and incurred high maintenance costs. With no in house control capabilities, the legacy system meant costly engineer site visits and could not offer voicemail services, resulting in lost calls and time wasted answering cold calls. Despite its lack of features, the system still took up valuable office space. Allied needed a system that was simple to use, could be managed in house, and was equipped with an array of new features.

SOLUTION:

- A ShoreTel Unified Communications system with ShoreTel Voice Switch 90V, 32 ShoreTel 265 IP phones, a conference room IP phone, and Solar Communications network cabling services to install extra ports.

BENEFITS:

- Calls are now transferred quickly and appropriately to the relevant Allied Telesis employee.
- ShoreTel Office Anywhere allows users to control their presence on the system, and calls can be routed to mobile devices and remote computers so they are not missed.
- Distributed architecture and single-image deployment enable IT staff to centrally manage the system, avoiding costly call out charges.
- Users can access voicemails both locally and remotely via telephone or computer connections.
- The compact system allows Allied to take back its server room and free-up valuable space for other equipment.

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Following a review of the business communications market, Allied dismissed traditional PBX systems, as they were unable to offer the functionality and integration capabilities the company required. Keith Hoult, Managing Director at Allied Telesis identified unified communications (UC) as the best solution for the company.

“After comparing different product demos from ShoreTel, Mitel and Avaya, we opted for the ShoreTel UC system as it proved to be the most cost-effective, scalable and easy to manage,” Mr. Hoult said. “We engaged the help of Solar Communications, a ShoreTel reseller partner, to design a tailored solution. Solar evaluated our current system, allowing us to integrate our data infrastructure and evaluate its scalability and built-in redundancy features.”

Efficiency is key

Solar Communications worked with Allied Telesis to identify areas where ShoreTel’s UC solution could offer cost-savings by heightening efficiency and reducing call charges. ShoreTel’s UC advanced calling options, including caller ID name and number, let calls be pre-screened and routed to the appropriate person. Customer satisfaction has heightened as a result of callers being connected to the appropriate advisor quicker and having their requests processed faster.

“We were looking for a system that would provide real differentiation in terms of customer service and ShoreTel’s system has exceeded our expectations,” Mr Hoult said. “We have witnessed a direct correlation between employee efficiency and improved customer service.”

Allied opted for the ShoreTel Voice Switch 90v, a 1U half-width voice switch that supports up to 90 IP phones, 90 voicemail mailboxes, and up to a 12 analog ports. The new system captured Allied’s requirements and offered room for future growth.

In addition, Allied’s old system was unable to screen the barrage of cold calls received daily, resulting in the receptionist missing important sales calls. With the new system annoying and time-wasting sales calls have decreased, as the receptionist is able to block or direct these calls accordingly.

Many of Allied’s sales team work off-site which had resulted in costly mobile calls, additional roaming charges and time wasted dialling into corporate voicemail. ShoreTel’s Mobile Call Manager offers Allied staff seamless remote access to communications tools, including direct access to their corporate directory and voicemail, giving mobile employees visual access to office extension capabilities directly from mobile devices. ShoreTel Mobile Call Manager has connected Allied’s mobile workforce with customers, colleagues and corporate offices. Customers can now reach all staff, irrespective of location, and all users can collaborate easily and quickly to ensure fast response to customer and partner enquiries. Routing calls over IP has also allowed Allied to avoid mobile rates and roaming charges.

“The ShoreTel UC system has enabled us to take back control of our phone system,” said Mr Hoult. “Ease of use has ensured users are no longer bogged down performing routine tasks, such as moving and adding users, and can get on with their appropriate job roles.”

Despite its lack of features, Allied’s legacy system had occupied a large portion of the server room. In contrast, ShoreTel’s UC solution is both feature rich and compact, allowing Allied access to numerous functionalities and the ability to reclaim the server room. “By eliminating the old system, and introducing a more compact model, we have freed up valuable space for other equipment,” Mr Hoult explained.

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Room for growth

Solar Communications worked with Allied to ensure installation went smoothly, stayed within budget and met the agreed project plan and timeframe. The system was up and running within three days. Allied reduced capital expenditure by opting for a tailored financing option, which helped reduce the system’s total cost of ownership and improved Allied’s return on investment.

The ShoreTel UC system is a completely distributed, scalable solution layered on the IP network with no single point of failure – offering Allied greater reliability and business value. Distributed architecture and single-image deployment has enabled Allied staff to centrally manage the system, and avoid costly engineer call out charges.

Since the ShoreTel system is both intuitive and easy to use, the company has been able to integrate staff across different departments in one directory, and simplified internal communications. Users can take full advantage of the system without the need for any specific technical knowledge, helping to ensure widespread adoption.

“The ShoreTel UC system not only offered features we currently require, but also the scope to continuously improve as we expand the business and our customers’ requirements change,” Mr Hoult said. “ShoreTel’s system is easy to develop which will allow us to maximise its value as we move further down the line.”

ABOUT SOLAR COMMUNICATIONS LTD

Established in 1988, Solar Communications is an award winning trusted communications partner for SME and enterprise businesses throughout the UK and Europe. With offices in Chippenham and London, Solar Communications has been “ShoreTel European Partner of the Year” for the past four years and is first and only European Partner to join the “ShoreTel Circle of Excellence.” Solar’s

knowledge and experience allows bespoke solutions tailored to business requirements that enable customers to improve productivity, reduce costs and increase profitability. Solar has a reputation for excellent customer support consistently scoring over 97% Customer satisfaction through independent analysis. For more information, visit solar.co.uk

ShoreTel European Partner of the Year 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011

Outstanding Customer Service Award 2009, 2010 and 2011

ShoreTel Circle of Excellence 2010 and 2011



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