solar communications

case study

LEGAL SERVICES SUCCESS STORY

Higgs & Sons Federates Its Workforce with ShoreTel

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Stephen Brown
IT Director, Higgs & Sons

Higgs & Sons, one of the largest law firms in the West Midlands, UK, is trusted by thousands of clients to protect their interests. Communication is key to Higgs & Sons' success and the firm has to ensure its legal staff are easily contactable at all times. Higgs & Sons takes pride in maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction, but its ageing telephony system resulted in clients calling a round robin of phone numbers to reach partners.

Higgs & Sons business model is dependent on maintaining a high level of client service but the company's legacy telephony system occasionally limited its ability to interact effectively with customers and staff. The company's IT network also suffered due to incorrect configuration and its WAN running at full capacity. After upgrading the network, the firm evaluated different IP-based communication systems from Mitel, Cisco and ShoreTel, inviting partners to tender and give product demonstrations.

The evaluation process identified the ShoreTel Unified Communications (UC) system as the best solution. "We opted for the ShoreTel UC system as it not only proved to be the most scalable and easy to manage, but also offered an all-inclusive cluster licensing," said Stephen Brown, IT Director, Higgs & Sons. "Competing systems hosted modularised licensing, strapping additional costs on for features, whereas the ShoreTel licensing model bundled all features, necessary hardware and supporting costs together and proved to be the most cost-effective system."

By standardising on the ShoreTel UC system, Higgs & Sons consolidated communications across its offices, thereby enhancing remote access, and ensuring that client inquiries are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Federating the workforce

Solar Communications, a ShoreTel EMEA partner, worked with Higgs & Sons to identify areas where ShoreTel's UC solution could federate its disparate workforce. Higgs & Sons' existing fragmented system prevented clients and partners from connecting easily. ShoreTel's advanced calling options, including caller ID name and number, enabled calls to be pre-screened and routed to the appropriate person.

By integrating voicemail capability, Higgs & Sons users are also able to retrace missed calls. Voicemails can be accessed locally, using a telephone or PC, or remotely via telephone or computer connections, ensuring users can follow-up with missed calls, irrespective of their location.

CHALLENGE:

- As its workforce increasingly relies on remote access, Higgs & Sons needed a system that offered increased visibility and ensured all client calls reached the partners, irrespective of their location.

SOLUTION:

- A ShoreTel UC system with 235 ShoreTel IP Phones, eight ShoreTel Voice Switches, 30 ShoreTel Communicator licences with mobile access, and ShoreTel Converged Conferencing. Installation also included two core Extreme switches, eight network Extreme switches, a wireless controller and five wireless access points.

BENEFITS:

- Seamless access to all ShoreTel capabilities from mobile devices and remote computers.
- Advanced call handling ensures client calls always get through to the appropriate person.
- Single image system allowed Higgs & Sons to consolidate communications across its offices

HIGGS & SONS SOLICITORS

LEGAL SERVICES SUCCESS STORY

"Staff are no longer afraid of missing important client calls if they step away from the office."

Stephen Brown
IT Director, Higgs & Sons

Due to the demanding nature of the job, Higgs & Sons workforce are often off-site with clients, or travelling between offices. ShoreTel Communicator with mobile access offers employees the same communications tools and integration with Microsoft Outlook as though they are at their deskphone. Higgs & Sons staff can now accept calls, view voicemails, and use Microsoft Outlook directories to identify phone numbers and make calls in a single click. Clients can now reach all employees, regardless of location, while all users can collaborate easily and quickly to ensure fast response to client and partner enquiries.

"We have witnessed increased productivity of our employees as a result of receiving full remote access to calls, voicemail and email services," Mr. Brown said. "Staff are no longer afraid of missing important client calls if they step away from the office. Everyone has access to the same capabilities whether they are at their desk, at home or with a client."

Taking control

ShoreTel and Solar Communications worked together to ensure the installation was performed smoothly, meeting with Higgs & Sons on a weekly basis to discuss the progress of the project. The existing array of hubs, cluttering Higgs & Sons server room, was removed and replaced with a compact, feature rich, system.

"Solar's honest, open attitude coupled with technical expertise and product knowledge ensured a trouble-free deployment," Mr. Brown added. "Due to the size of this project, the implementation was complex and Solar was invaluable in guiding us through the different phases, overcoming any issue that arose."

Higgs & Sons revenue depends on constantly superior client service, so enhanced disaster recovery was at the forefront of the firm's mind when implementing the new system. The ShoreTel UC system is a completely distributed, scalable solution layered on the IP network with no single point of failure—offering Higgs & Sons the 99.999 percent (five-nines) availability required for mission-critical operations.

By leveraging all voice calls over IP Higgs & Sons has simplified communications across the company. The ShoreTel UC system lets the IT staff move and manage numbers across the organisation, and scales easily as the company continues to grow.

"The ShoreTel UC system is both intuitive and easy to use," said Helen Hill, head of front of house, Higgs & Sons. "We have quickly adapted to the new system and are able to make full use of all its features without the need for any specific technical knowledge."

Higgs & Sons have taken back control of its phone system and now have a solution that is suited to its business needs. Integrating staff across Higgs & Sons offices has simplified internal communications and ensured the firm offers the personal service demanded by its clients. ShoreTel's UC system has federated Higgs & Sons' workforce and ensures staff never miss a call.

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

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