

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



ABOUT MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Type: Local Government

Location: UK

Configuration: Malvern Hills District Council deployed a Mitel 3300 IP Communications Platform along with Mitel Navigator telephones to connect employees; from office staff to field workers. Demonstrating true technology leadership, the Council is using Microsoft® Office Communications Server integrated with the Mitel IP platform to deliver telephony with presence and availability alongside instant and unified messaging to enable staff to work more harmoniously while in different locations

Website: <http://malvern.whub.org.uk>

CUSTOMER NEEDS

- Minimise voicemail tag and reduce email overload
- Consolidate communications channels into a single interface
- Reduce the plethora of gadgets and devices
- Communicate more effectively between different sites and different departments
- Ensure residents get a prompt resolution to their issue or question
- Provide the right communications tools to migratory personnel working at different locations and at different times

Malvern Hills District Council embraces unified communications to support virtual team collaboration

Malvern Hills District Council is responsible for delivering a variety of services, from issuing planning permission and housing benefit payments, to council tax collection and environmental services for residents in Worcestershire. Despite being a small district council, it still needs to deliver the same levels of service to residents as larger councils that benefit from economies of scale. It is crucial that staff work with optimal efficiency to meet the fierce challenges of delivering a vast number of services with a limited budget.

Malvern Hills Council was operating an aging telephony system that was not supporting the organisation adequately. It needed a phone system that it could depend on which offered a reliable means for people to contact the council. Instead of simply replacing it with a traditional phone system, the council chose to move forward with an IP communications platform. The council wanted to implement a system that would support more collaborative working across the council, from those in the contact centre, to those on the road, to desk-based employees and home workers.

Mac Chivers, ICT Manager at Malvern Hills District Council explains, "We wanted to introduce a phone and IT system that would give staff tools to work with ease, and to reduce the complexity that has been introduced by modern technology."

Mac Chivers had a vision of simplifying communications by rationalising the many gadgets and software systems that were being used. Technology, like email, was wearing staff down rather than improving operations. He wanted to consolidate the communications channels into a single interface that could be managed together.



SOLUTION COMPONENTS

- Mitel 3300 MXe IP Communications Platform (ICP)
- Mitel Navigators (IP phones)
- Microsoft Office Communication Server (OCS) licenses plus integration

RESULTS

- Overall increase in efficiency of workers using the new system
- 40-50% more calls being managed per day without additional resources
- Staff have more time to focus on their job rather than searching for people
- Staff are no longer slaves to email, using instant messaging to see if people are free
- Reduced the irritation of modern technology, making it easier to communicate
- Staff can now work at different sites and communicate effortlessly
- Rapid adoption of technology by users who quickly grasped it's usefulness

In order to define the strategy to fulfil Mac's vision, the council looked closely at how employees worked and identified where there was room for improvement. The audit concluded that employees were losing valuable time attempting to collaborate with teams in other parts of the council. For example, customer service representatives spent extensive amounts of time calling different offices simply trying to locate the right personnel to respond to customer queries.

From this it was clear that the council needed tools that would improve collaboration across their distributed teams to enhance collaboration between groups.

The Solution

Chivers took the unusual step of setting up a demonstration room in the Council's offices to provide vendors with a showcase for their technology. Several vendors, including Mitel®, showcased their products. Employees were invited to trial the technology and provide feedback on what suited their working habits best. This was pivotal in helping the Council identify the most relevant products and features.

Chivers continues, "We investigated IP communications systems from many vendors but Mitel stood head and shoulders above the others. It was clear that Mitel offered best of breed technology in both IP Communications and integration with OCS. Moreover, Mitel offered advice that was easy to understand, whereas other manufacturers made it unnecessarily complex. For me, it was crucial that they took the time to understand our business requirements and offered advice based on our needs rather than trying to shoehorn in their own technology. In turn, I felt confident that Mitel would deliver."

"One of my objectives was to involve staff as much as possible in the selection of the new communications system. I felt Mitel took the time to listen to employees. When staff learned we had chosen Mitel, they were eager to see it in action, as they had a positive experience trailing the technology," explains Chivers.

Malvern Hills District Council now has integrated telephony, instant messaging, emails, voicemail, and voicemail delivered as audio email. Presence information in Office Communicator scans the Outlook calendar, displaying members who are available, busy or away – making team working better. When on the road, staff members can call into the system, be read emails and get information on what's in their calendar.

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– Mac Chivers, ICT Manager,
Malvern Hills District Council

Now staff know when and where people are. They are no longer a slave to voice mail and email, but can use presence and instant messaging to quickly track someone down and determine their availability for a call or an ad-hoc meeting. Rather than wasting time looking for people, staff has more time to focus on their jobs.

This has made it possible for the Council to introduce flexibility into the way people work; allowing people who were previously disconnected, to work more collaboratively. As the council is focusing on partnership working, this technology helps to not only address existing needs but to help join up disparate agencies as well.

There has also been a significant improvement in customer interaction. The contact centre now handles approximately 15,000 calls per month with four people on duty. Prior to the new system the same four employees were only handling 10,000 calls. Using the Microsoft OCS, integrated with the Mitel 3300 IP Communications Platform (ICP), agents in the contact centre can visually identify which subject matter experts are available and route calls to them instead of trying several extensions before connecting the caller to someone who can resolve their query.

Chivers adds, “Mitel was chosen by our staff. Mitel has not only been helpful and flexible throughout the tendering and implementation phases, but continues to support us even now. They have provided a solution that genuinely improves our productivity today and will continue to do so for many years. It just goes to show that your employees really do know best.”

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