

New communication system saves money and enhances customer service



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Martyn Paddon
MTA Business Development Manager

Reducing complexity

Until recently MTA Solicitors (MTA) had its communications facilities managed by a third-party business partner. Martyn Paddon, Business Development Manager at MTA, explains: “When we stopped working with our provider we decided to review our existing voice and data communications facilities. We soon found that it was not suitable for our needs as a smaller company and was very costly.”

In looking for a replacement, MTA was attracted to the idea of internet protocol (IP). An IP-based system would not become obsolete and would allow MTA's existing data network to carry voice calls between its three sites without call charges. MTA invited proposals from potential vendors, including its BT Local Business.

Flexible finance

BT recommended a Cisco communications system, together with a more cost effective data network between London and Manchester that would be

About MTA Solicitors

MTA Solicitors (MTA) is a successful law practice that focuses on providing high quality, cost effective legal services to both private and corporate clients. The company has five offices – three in London and two in Manchester – and employs around 250 people. MTA had originally specialised in the field of personal injury claims but today the company's portfolio extends to debt recovery, conveyancing, wills and probate, clinical negligence, employment, matrimonial, and mediation.

better able to carry IP-based voice traffic. Martyn Paddon says: “We had experience of BT and had been pleased with the service provided. We already had Cisco networks in our offices, and we were attracted to the prospect of a single provider to implement and maintain the entire system.”

The BT solution utilised the existing Cisco equipment to carry both voice and data on the one network at MTA sites. The BT deal included a trade-in allowance for any Cisco equipment that needed to be upgraded, and a five-year maintenance agreement. Implementation was completed on schedule in January 2007. Martyn Paddon says: “BT assigned a project manager to oversee the implementation. Everything went smoothly and we were kept informed and well briefed at all times.”

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Enhancing customer service

MTA now has a flexible communications system to support its evolving needs. It has improved the contactability of staff and solicitors, with callers now able to leave voice messages for the first time. Martyn Paddon comments: “We issue around 15,000 customer satisfaction questionnaires each year. In the six months since the new system has been in place only a tiny fraction of customers mention difficulty in contacting our people, compared to a 20 per cent before.”

Overheads have substantially reduced. Lower data network costs, free inter-office phone calls, and reduced line rental charges mean that communications expenditure has gone down by 50 per cent, saving the company more than £60,000 per annum. Improved management information



will enable MTA to better understand its calling patterns to help it select the best discount plans. Together these savings will see payback of the capital cost of the solution inside two years.

Martyn Paddon sums up: “BT did a great job. The approach was very straightforward, and the solution was delivered on time and on budget. We

now have a leading edge communications system that could help give us an edge over our competitors.”

About the BT Cisco solution

The BT solution for MTA is centred on the server-based Cisco Unified Communications Manager (UCM) system. The primary UCM server is located at the company's London site. Two further remote UCM servers provide back up, with each able to support call routing across the entire network if necessary. Cisco Catalyst switches enable connectivity to the desk through existing Cat 5E structured cabling and provide Power over Ethernet to Cisco Unified IP phones. Voicemail facilities are provided across the network by the Cisco Unity server-based application.

A BT MPLS (multi-protocol label switching) network provides inter-office wide area connectivity. MPLS provides a shared rather than circuit-based network, which allows the simultaneous passage of voice and data services between the sites. Voice clarity is assured by the ability of MPLS to prioritise voice packets over less time sensitive traffic such as email or file transfer. BT ISDN30 digital lines serve all sites providing connection to the public telephone network. The ISDN lines ensure high call quality, increased resilience, and access to network-based features such as the ability to automatically re-route calls as part of a disaster recovery plan.

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