



Exchange Communications reduce call costs by up to 25% and enhance business processes for McConechy's Tyre Service Limited

McConechy's has become Scotland's largest independent tyre operator, providing a range of tyre, exhaust and vehicle repair facilities. Established in 1957, the business provides all of the products and services which owners need to keep their vehicles running smoothly, efficiently, economically and legally.

McConechy's had experienced steady growth, spanning some 26 branches throughout Scotland, each staffed by fully trained and industry-certified auto-technicians. In 2003, McConechy's acquired Goodyear Dunlop's branches throughout Scotland, resulting in an overnight expansion in Scotland to 50 branches. This brought with it several technical difficulties which had to be addressed quickly so that customer satisfaction was not impacted.

The Challenge

Following this extraordinary growth, a set of obstacles were identified which, if unresolved, could impact on the unification of the enlarged operation. The wide variety of installed PBX switches would not only cause compatibility problems but would also attract high maintenance and support costs. Full integration of the data and telephony infrastructure would form a solid basis for business incorporation and the first hurdle being standardisation across all sites. Costs could also be reduced by rethinking the usage of the telephone systems and how calls were made between stores.

Modern communications tools were needed to make this happen, including low cost, easy to use and networkable telephony applications together with support for mobile managers, who would be on the road for most of their working day. In addition, a link was needed to connect McConechy's Warrington wholesale branch into project. These features would all be part of the full remit of requirements to deliver better customer service at lower cost for McConechy's.



The Solution

Avaya BusinessPartner Exchange Communications was chosen by McConechy's to provide the solution to solve these problems. It was recommended that the Avaya IP Office family of converged telephone systems be provided across the entire network. It would be used to connect geographically-dispersed branches, from Kirkwall in Orkney to Stranraer in the south of Scotland. Once in place, support would be available for the transfer of both data and voice across a single, converged network using IP telephony over the internet. The bottom line was that this approach would realise long term savings in call costs and delivery of first class applications to the benefit of the customer.

Avaya IP Office fits the bill

Avaya IP Office was offered as a converged communication system – an 'all-in-one' solution designed to meet the voice and data communications demands facing small and medium-sized distributed businesses like McConechy's. Exchange Communications explained how, with its modular design, the Avaya IP Office family could scale up to 360 extensions, meeting the needs of mobile users, standalone locations and home workers, as well as networked office locations. In this respect, the Avaya IP Office range was a perfect match for McConechy's.

In all, a wide range of consultancy services were delivered by Exchange Communications, who acted as single source of supply for hardware, network services, including such as ADSL ordering and trunk line rental, billing, project management, installation and diagnostic support. Through this package of consultancy, they defined the most suitable solution for each site; with Avaya IP Office 412 and digital handsets being installed at the Ayr head office, and each branch being provided with smaller IP Office systems, including IP Office 403, 406 and Small Office Edition, equipped with analogue handsets.

Broadband VoIP reduces costs

Controlling call costs between McConechy's 51 sites, combined with managing charges associated with calls to external numbers, presented a real issue for the business. Exchange Communications helped



by showing that, by using the Internet as the medium for securely connecting sites, all internal calls between these outlets would be achieved at no cost – delivering an almost immediate and significant reduction in monthly bills.

To do this, each Avaya IP Office switch was connected to high speed ADSL circuits, through LinkSys ADSL Routers. By configuring the switches for Virtual Private Networking enabled inter-site voice networking at no cost with instant call set up.

Other savings were made through the creation of new shortcode numbering schemes. These were introduced for staff to call any telephone at any outlet and this made the transition to the new system quicker, ensured immediacy of communications for stock checking and availability and created an identical dialling process for all users. Equally, remote area managers and customers also benefited from the new system. McConechy's introduced DDI to facilitate person to person dialling for staff, while a freephone service was advertised for customers to connect directly to their nearest depot.

Applications

To automate and manage telephone calls at the head office, Exchange Communications provided Avaya's Phone Manager Pro and VoiceMail Pro applications.

The Phone Manager Pro application provided selected McConechy's users with new, PC based visual access to the features of their desktop telephone, including setting up and managing calls and transfers. This also provided integration with contact management packages to generate screen popping, voicemail control – using IP Office VoiceMail Pro – as well as a personal phone number directory.

These applications were used by operator and helpdesk staff at the head office to see immediate, on-screen caller information, on receipt of an incoming call. This, linked to customer database information, would allow McConechy Hi-Q to recognise the identity of the caller and respond accordingly.

Finally, to assist in supporting mobility around the head office, DECT analogue handsets were also provided, giving staff the flexibility to be available through a single number, even when not based at their desk.



Customer Benefits

Donald Carmichael, managing director at McConechy's said: *"We estimate that, by using our IP-based converged network in this way has reduced our phone bills by at least 25 percent and has allowed us to make considerable savings in other areas of the business. The enhanced communications between depots and our head office at Ayr has also made it possible for us to speed up many of our business processes and this has ultimately meant we can provide a better service to our customers, right across Scotland."*

Improved inter-site communications made it possible for head office and branch staff to communicate quickly and directly over the internet, saving resources and increasing the efficiency of operations.

Management of the system was also enhanced. *"An offshoot of our new network has been the ability to centrally manage both IT and telephony systems. It is so much easier for our IT team to control the Avaya IP Office switches in contrast to the old TDM switches,"* said Donald Carmichael.

Tom Sime, managing director of Exchange Communications commented: *"McConechy's was looking for an 'all-in-one' system to improve communication and business processes across multiple sites. IP Office has fulfilled these requirements and has provided McConechy's with a competitive edge over other tyre service companies."*



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