



Futurelink Group Case Study



SpliceCom

Britain's leading developer of telephone systems

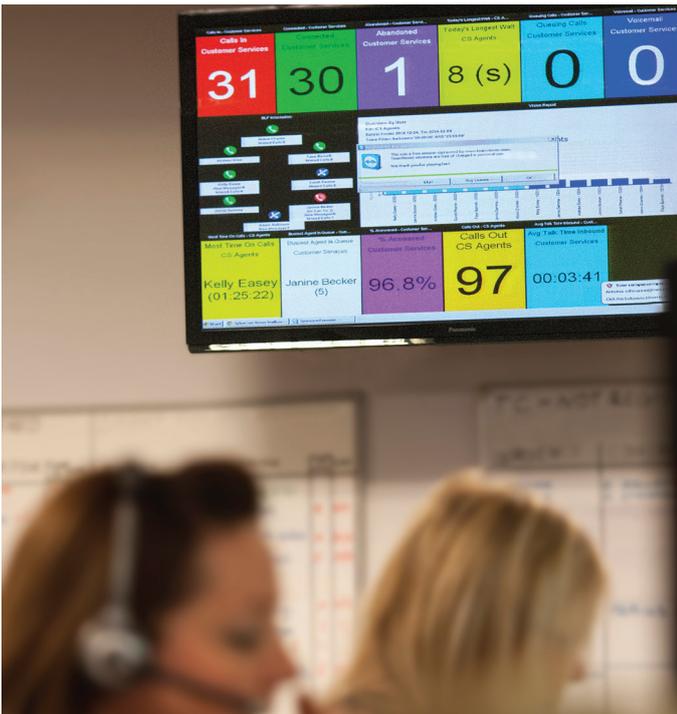
Background

Based in Kings Langley, Hertfordshire, the Futurelink Group has been providing payroll contractor solutions since 1996. They deliver the products and expertise needed to ensure that contractors, freelancers, interims and temporary workers don't pay too much or too little and stay compliant with HMRC.



The Drivers For Change

For the past 2 years Futurelink had met its telephony needs through a hosted service from Voicenet (now 8x8 Solutions), utilising Cisco handsets, Redbox call recording and Akixi call reporting. However, a fundamental business requirement to accurately report on inbound helpdesk calls relating to payroll queries, alongside a desire to reduce monthly costs, necessitated a rethink on the overall Futurelink voice strategy.



"When it came to our helpdesk operation, the hosted voice system we were using just couldn't deliver the statistics required by the business for analysis and planning purposes, correctly," said Tiffany Cornwell, Operations Support Assistant for Futurelink. "In addition, although on the face of it the per monthly fee we were paying looked better than a single upfront capital outlay, after two years it was clear that it would be far more cost-effective for the business in the medium to long term to purchase rather than rent a system. As well as improving our reporting and reducing our costs, we also wanted to increase the business telephone functionality available to our employees and to deal with a single source supplier who had a in-depth working knowledge of the full system we would be deploying. From experience, we had found both of these to be weak links in the hosted system we had been using," continued Cornwell.

Installation

Because of the previous experience with the hosted voice service, Futurelink only considered "on-premise" solutions from leading vendors. "We looked at systems from Cisco, Samsung, Mitel, Avaya and SpliceCom," said Cornwell. "In the end we choose SpliceCom because of the system's capabilities, the strong link between the vendor and our supplier, and the readiness of both parties to come in and really learn how we worked, so they could advise us on the best way to deploy and set-up our new system. We felt everyone showed a great level of knowledge and were very helpful."



Futurelink's initial implementation consisted of SpliceCom's S8025 Soft PBX supporting 50 x PCS 552 IP handsets. "Stage one consists of a single cost centre, encompassing fifty employees spread across a range of internal companies," explains Cornwell. This also includes our helpdesk for payroll related queries, which utilises SpliceCom's Vision Call Centre and consists of nine "agents", two supervisors and three wallboards. The second stage will address our Business Centre; this will contain roughly thirty companies, each having between two and twenty employees. The third stage will see us rolling out a brand new system, to include the coms room and all associated cabling, into the two new buildings that we recently purchased. Basically, our plan is to keep rolling the SpliceCom system out to all parts of our business once we have satisfied ourselves that we've made any final tweaks that might be required to the configuration to get it exactly as we want it and have the knowledge to support our business centre clients."



Solutions on the move

Futurelink has also investigated how mobility could be utilised to best benefit the business. An initial trial saw two directors running iPCS, SpliceCom's IP Softphone app for smartphones and tablets, on their mobile phones. This enabled them to make and receive their business calls wherever they were, whilst also providing access to the same advanced telephony feature set that they enjoyed when using their desktop phones. Following the successful completion of the trial and employing the lessons learnt, Futurelink has now extended the use of mobility across their entire sales force, with everyone running iPCS.



Conclusion

"In summary, I feel that the support we have received from both SpliceCom and their Partner, combined with their extensive in-depth knowledge could not be matched. As with every large system change there will always be challenges, it's how these are addressed that's key. In this particular project we found the application of planning and knowledge greatly assisted us to transition with minimal business impact. Based on our experience we would recommend the combination of SpliceCom and their Partner as suppliers for any company, be they small or large. This phone system will work for you," concluded Tiffany Cornwell.

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