

Here's how I reduced costs by using Unified Communications technology

Wesley Doran is the managing director at **Taurus Promotions Ltd**, a provider of screen printing and embroidery services in the Bolton area, which employs 7 staff. The company has an office in Bolton town centre and a remote home office; the two locations are linked to the same computer and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system. Doran believes the VoIP installation has already paid for itself and saved the company additional money. The ability for himself and his wife, who is the company administration and accounts person, to access their company email and accounts from home has increased their productivity and reduced their requirement to be physically in the office, which has allowed them to be able to spend more time with their children.

What I did

to introduce new technology

"In 2006, we bought our business and after some analysis we realised that the previous owner had not invested in a computer or telephone system for many years. We had one telephone line into the premises for voice calls, one for FAX and one for ADSL. Two of the lines were connected to a telephone system which didn't work.

The premises are in an old mill and we had to use a DECT telephone and pass this around the office or take it through to another area

should our printers be required to take a call. Even worse should our printers need to make a call they would have to stop work, come into the office and take the DECT phone leaving the office staff with no phone. Also anyone trying to call us would get engaged tone if we were making a call. In our business, if someone calls and doesn't get through the likelihood is they will just call the next supplier in the list and we will have potentially lost a sale.

Having just bought the business there was very little spare cash to invest in a computer system but as most of our work comes in via email, we really needed a system which was reliable and simple to use as we are not technical and can't

afford a dedicated member of staff to look after our systems. We needed the system to be able to store our art work and to be able to pass this art work onto our printing department easily.

One of our suppliers told us about a local company that provided a system which was a combined computer and telephone system, which didn't require a technical person to maintain it. It sounded ideal for us and so we invited the company to come and speak to us.

Although the system described was obviously advanced it was very simple to use and we could see that it would immediately save us money in terms of call costs and give our customers a better contact experience. The telephone system gave us as many outgoing lines as we needed whilst freeing up the incoming line for customer calls, without having to rent any extra lines. This is done through Voice over Internet Protocol technology.

What really sold it to us was the ability to connect our home system to the office system and have an office phone at home. Not only am I able to access my files from home but I can speak to my staff from home without incurring any call charges. As an added bonus when I am on the road delivering I am also able to respond to sales enquires that come in via email from my mobile phone.

What the equipment did for us

When it came to installation, all we needed to do was liaise with one supplier who provided everything we needed to start working, broadband to new PCs. We were able to reduce our paid for telephone lines down to just one which was already being utilised as our ADSL circuit so this was already being paid for. We

used to pay over £340 a quarter for our three lines and our ADSL circuit now we just pay just £120. That saves us £1440 a year just in our recurring costs. We subscribe to a £10 a month VoIP service which gives us 1000 minutes per month so we know our call costs monthly and if we run short we can just top this up or use the standard telephone line. We have reduced our call costs by over 70%.

We have a great computer system which provides us with secure email via free anti virus and spam subscriptions which are updated daily. My wife can do the accounts from home and print off invoices in the office from home for our staff to chase up. For a small business we feel we have a very advanced communications system which is easy to use and maintain and best of all saves us money.

Never missing our customers calls

VoIP has helped us present a professional image to our customers. We have an IVR system which answers our callers and then rings various extensions sometimes ringing all of them if no one picks the call up. If the call is not picked up it gets put through to voicemail. We never miss a call.