

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



SALFORD CITY COUNCIL

Type: Local Government

Location: UK

Configuration: Mitel 3300 IP Communications Platform (ICP), Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 and Exchange Server 2007

Website: www.salford.gov.uk

CUSTOMER NEEDS

- Promote flexible working environment
- Improve collaboration between teams and departments
- Increase productivity and efficiencies

"We are improving services, reducing costs and driving productivity to new highs. In addition, the capability of working with such major vendor technologies is enabling a more 'joined up' government approach in the area whilst also supporting our Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) targets for the future."

— Jonathan Burt, Network and Infrastructure Manager, Salford City Council

Council Increases Productivity by 35 per cent with Unified Communications Solution from Mitel and Microsoft

Salford City Council is one of 10 local authorities that make up Greater Manchester in the north-west of England. With 9,500 employees it provides local government services for 220,000 people in its constituency. In recent years, the Council has overseen vast improvements in its administration processes and has received three out of four stars in its latest Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), which reflects this change.

Building on this achievement, the council launched an initiative to upgrade its IT infrastructure and promote a flexible working environment. Jonathan Burt, Network and Infrastructure Manager, Salford City Council, said "We want our employees to use the latest technology to improve collaboration between teams and departments. Our aim is to increase productivity and efficiency by supporting flexible working while improving automated processes in the office."

A Seamless Partnership

The council decided to implement Office Communications Server 2007 and Exchange Server 2007 working along side the Mitel® 3300 ICP as the council's main communications environment.

Employees can now use tools such as Instant Messaging (IM) and video and voice conferencing to enhance collaboration, increase productivity and improve customer services, delivered across a highly reliable Mitel IP telephony infrastructure.



SOLUTION COMPONENTS

- Mitel 3300 IP Communications Platform (ICP)
- Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007
- Microsoft Exchange Server 2007

RESULTS

- More than 85 per cent of calls now get through to the correct contact due to the operators using presence and being able to see who is available
- Increase in productivity by 35 per cent with staff using IM and presence
- Saving on real estate by enabling home working. Removing 30 per cent of desk space in the IT department and 25 per cent in the audit department

The council's existing telephony system consisted of a traditional switchboard and transferring calls was a highly inefficient process. For example, employees would mark a whiteboard to let receptionists know they were in the building and available to receive a call. At this time the intended recipient successfully received only 50 per cent of calls.

In response employees would use email extensively, but this was also problematic. Jonathan said "We needed to move away from email and telephony communications because they're impractical during busy periods. Email chains can get too long and voicemails can be confusing. We needed faster responses to queries, providing a better service to our customers, which IM can deliver."

Benefits All Round

Deployment began in 2008, with incremental rollout and testing across the council during the remainder of the year.

The unified communications solution contributes to the support of a flexible working environment. Mitel supports the infrastructure and telephony for the remote workers whilst the Microsoft application delivers the key presence and collaborative tools which allow workers not only to communicate more effectively but also helps them to still feel part of a 'connected organisation' whilst working remotely from the main sites.

"The Council has an ongoing commitment to adopt more flexible ways of working which involves home working arrangements. The use of the presence and IM tools within Microsoft OCS are, in combination with the Mitel platform, providing a unified portal for communications which supports an average 35 per cent increase in productivity, measured through key departments increased call completion rates," stated Jonathan.

The Council's green credentials have also increased with the reduction of carbon emissions from employees working from home, which is also a bonus for employees who can cut their commuting costs. Flexible working also increases employee retention as work / life balance is improved and job satisfaction reduces staff turnover with the Council benefiting from retaining expertise. Remote workers are now able to work from home and still feel part of the team with the unified communication solution that enables them to see the presence of their colleagues and communicate either by a phone call, sending an IM or video or conference call.

Flexible working has provided the Council with the ability to minimise office space requirements therefore reducing the cost of real estate and removing 30 per cent of desk space in the IT department and 25 per cent in the Audit department, with more planned in other sectors.

Proven Results

With the adoption of the unified communications solution, the council has seen significant improvements in productivity, collaboration, costs, and customer response times.

Customer service has dramatically improved as employees have moved away from the whiteboard system and now receptionists are using the presence awareness to check the availability of staff. In just one week, successful call handling increased to more than 85 per cent from 50 per cent.

The tight integration between the Mitel and Microsoft platforms is helping to support the Council in its approach to strategic change across the region. Jonathan comments, "We are improving services, reducing costs and driving productivity to new highs. In addition, the capability of working with such major vendor technologies is enabling a more 'joined up' government approach in the area whilst also supporting our Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) targets for the future."

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Global Headquarters

Tel: +1(613) 592-2122
Fax: +1(613) 592-4784

U.S.

Tel: +1(480) 961-9000
Fax: +1(480) 961-1370

EMEA

Tel: +44(0)1291-430000
Fax: +44(0)1291-430400

CALA

Tel: +1(613) 592-2122
Fax: +1(613) 592-7825

Asia Pacific

Tel: +852 2508 9780
Fax: +852 2508 9232

www.mitel.com

For more information on our worldwide office locations, visit our website at www.mitel.com/offices

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