

NB Real Estate transforms phone communications with COLT's IP Voice solution



Customer:

NB Real Estate

Sector:

Professional Services

Business:

Commercial property firm

Challenge:

Introducing a new IP Voice service and preparing for further business expansion

Services used:

COLT IP Voice Solutions
COLT Ethernet Private Network (E-PN)

NB Real Estate chose COLT to replace its traditional phone system with a single IP Voice solution that would be simpler to manage, reduce costs and help its employees work more efficiently.

NB Real Estate provides services across the commercial real estate industry from buying and selling buildings and floor space to property and facilities management.

The firm has expanded rapidly in the last few years and employs around 550 people, many of whom work from home or remotely. It has offices in London, Manchester, Birmingham and Edinburgh.

Business challenge

NB Real Estate operates in a very competitive market. It relies on highly reliable and quality communications systems to ensure its people can keep in touch with clients at all times.

"One of my top five priorities is communications," said NB Real Estate IT director, Nick Scott. "We are a sales driven company. Our people need to be in constant communication with our clients wherever they are. At the same time, I need to focus on security and compliance and ensure, for example, that we have the ability to store every single voicemail for compliance purposes."

NB Real Estate was opening new offices and rebuilding the infrastructure it had in place. At the time, it had a disjointed phone service with a different phone system in each office. Its main phone switch took up a lot of space in its

comms room and was also reaching the end of its life. The firm decided to introduce a new national-based system for all its employees in the UK that could also be extended across Europe as the company expands.

Given the importance of phone communications, it was critical that the new solution would offer employees a very high quality service 24x7, as well as ways to communicate faster and more efficiently.

Why VoIP?

Nick Scott had three key priorities when looking for a new phone solution. He wanted to integrate the company's voice and data networks together, reduce the costs of operating the system and make the infrastructure easier to manage.

VoIP ticked all these boxes for NB Real Estate as it would enable them to centralise the phone system and simplify management, as well as get the benefits of integrating the phone and IT systems. Nick Scott looked for a provider that offered a very high level of technical expertise and would be very responsive.

COLT's IP Voice Solution

NB Real Estate selected COLT to provide a managed IP Voice service. Avaya equipment





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Nick Scott,
IT director, NB Real Estate.

would be hosted in COLT's data centre and accessed via an IP VPN network. COLT partner, CCT, came on board to provide ongoing support for the service and help NB Real Estate to deploy new functionality.

Nick Scott said, “The big advantage of COLT as they could provide the entire managed solution including network and system. We don't have the resources to deal with lots of different providers. They also had a track record in providing quality services in the UK and across Europe.”

“We experienced a few quality of service issues in rolling out the new system as the technical delivery is so different from a traditional phone service. But those issues were quickly ironed out and now we get a very good quality of service.”

Benefits – lower costs and new ways of working

IP Voice has delivered a huge step in efficiency for NB Real Estate and its employees compared to its original service. The firm has reduced costs by integrating voice and data together on to a single network. IP Voice is also helping employees to work more efficiently.

NB Real Estate has integrated MS Outlook and Communicator with the phone system. Employees can use the Communicator as their main ‘communications hub’, using ‘Presence’ functionality to see if people are available and then clicking to call them.

The system has also brought benefits for the firm's mobile workers - as voicemail and email are integrated together, voicemails appear in their Outlook inbox so that there is no need to check different devices for messages. ‘Follow me’ functionality also means clients can reach employees quickly as the system tracks them down to the device they are using at the time.

Working with COLT

Scott commented, “If you want stability and robustness and you want things to work 24x7, COLT is a great choice. For our type of business, they are a fantastic IT partner.”

Preparing for business expansion

NB Real Estate is planning to expand its business further. To prepare for this, the IT team has replaced the original IP VPN with COLT's Ethernet Private Network (E-PN) solution. As E-PN has any to any network design, is cost effective and easily scalable, it will be even simpler to add new sites and to increase bandwidth levels as the company grows.

Scott concluded, “Working with COLT, we have put in place a very robust and scalable Ethernet-based VoIP service. This will be invaluable to us as we grow our business in the UK and beyond.”