

Leading mortgage broker watches telephony costs 'plummet' thanks to Obsidian solution

“What really swung it for us was the fact that there was no up-front expenditure. It didn't cost us a penny, so we could only save money. It's working even better than we thought it would - we're saving somewhere in the region of £10,000 per month, so that's £120,000 a year straight onto our profit figures!”

**Remo Del-Greco – Head of IT,
London and Country Mortgages**

London and Country Mortgages Ltd. (L&C) is the country's leading whole of market no-fee mortgage broker. The company has won more awards than any other UK mortgage broker, including 'Mortgage IFA of the Year' on four occasions, and has been selected to work with major brands such as Tesco, Motley Fool and The Guardian over the years.

The challenge

L&C is based in Bath, England's only World Heritage City, and has more than 240 staff across two sites. As the business has developed, L&C has always worked to control costs. Remo Del-Greco, Head of IT for the business, explains further:

“We are a growing business, but like all companies, we felt the effects of the recession starting to bite in 2008. We were already looking at ways to reduce costs, so the call we received from Obsidian about their Landline to Mobile Cost Saving service came at just the right time. Things were getting tougher and so any option to save money had to be given a try. What really swung it for us was the fact that there was no up-front expenditure. It didn't cost us a penny, so we could only save money.”

Key features

- Initial predicted savings of £114,000 over two years
- Fully-managed solution with no initial outlay
- More than 140,000 minutes per month managed by Obsidian
- A 50%+ reduction in landline to mobile call costs
- Extended solution now saving an average of £120,000 per annum

Having reviewed L&C's call spend, Obsidian identified that the company was making somewhere in the region of 150,000 minutes worth of landline to mobile calls per month, which was quite a concern, when on average a call to a mobile from a desk phone is at least twice and sometimes three times as expensive as calling from another mobile.

Landline to Mobile Cost Savings are achieved via the implementation of a GSM Gateway which is plugged into a company's PBX, effectively turning expensive 'landline to mobile' calls into much cheaper 'mobile to mobile' calls. With this information in hand, and after a visit to Standard Bank, one of Obsidian's other customers, Remo made the decision to proceed - and the solution was implemented at the main site, Beazer House, in August 2008.

The solution

After further discussion, and in light of a slowing down in business due to the recession, Remo decided to opt for a system which would support 99,000 landline to mobile minutes per month in the first instance. And on this basis, Obsidian projected that a saving of £114,000 could be made over the initial 24 month contract. Remo continues:

"We decided to opt for the lower amount as it was better to be in a situation where we could upgrade when necessary rather than being left with unused minutes. Obsidian helped us to determine the correct amount of minutes and number of SIM cards for our needs, as well as the best tariff. They arrived at 10am on the day of implementation and by 4pm it was all up and running! It was as simple as that."

A further 16,200 minutes per month were added to the contract in September 2008, to increase capacity. Then, in June 2009, an additional GSM Gateway was installed at London and Country Mortgages' second office in Bath, adding an additional 25,200 minutes. This brought the total capacity across the two sites to 140,400 minutes per month, to support the 240 staff members, and so increased the savings even further - as Remo explains:

"It's working even better than we thought it would. We're saving somewhere in the region of £10,000 per month, so that's £120,000 a year straight onto our profit figures! Savings are very impressive and they would be even greater for larger organisations where there is more landline to mobile traffic."

"We've been tracking our call profile over the years and it's clear that more and more calls are being made from the office to mobiles. For example, in 2006 27% of our minutes were landline to mobile, but by 2009 that figure had risen to 46%. So that's more of the expensive call types which we would have been paying for without the Obsidian solution."

Further benefits

In addition to Landline to Mobile Cost Saving, the GSM Gateway also enables L&C to send automatic SMS messages to customers. If an outbound call to a mobile is made and no answer is received, then the Gateway will automatically send an SMS advising the customer that they were called by L&C and asking them to call back on a certain number. This ensures that calls are not missed and makes it easy for customers to call back on the correct number, so improving customer service even further. The solution has been a complete success, as he concludes:

"I've been in IT for many years and this is one situation where you really feel that you're getting something for nothing. Visiting Standard Bank to see it in action really helped us, as it's not until you see the bills that you really understand. We've always been more than happy to be a reference site for Obsidian ourselves, and to show people how our own telecoms costs have plummeted."

**If you would like to find out more,
or to arrange a free site survey,
please call 0203 023 7999,
email info@obsidiantelecoms.com
or visit www.obsidiantelecoms.com**