



NEC Group - Using the communications infrastructure to support strategic business objectives.



“The evolution of The NEC Group box office into national ticketing agency The Ticket Factory meant that we required a more advanced approach to contact centre telephony. Given the obvious cost-savings and efficiencies that could be achieved through convergence, it made sense to transform the entire network and migrate to IP. We had a tight timescale for deployment and Amillan were able to meet these requirements exactly, delivering the project on time and within budget.”

Andrew McManus,
IT Director,
The NEC Group

The NEC Group has placed Birmingham on the map as one of the world’s elite cities for conferences, exhibitions and events. With five venues to choose from, the NEC Group has the capability to host and manage any public or trade event for any number of people. The National Indoor Arena (NIA), NEC Arena, NEC, Symphony Hall and the International Convention Centre (ICC) are all part of the NEC Group.

The Challenges

A communications infrastructure is important in every business but it’s critical to the NEC Group. With heavy reliance on the telephone system for bookings and enquiries, revenue, customer service and reputation rest on the performance of the telephone system.

The first challenge at the NEC was to find a solution that could support the strategic objectives of the business. A new box office was about to be launched to extend the booking capabilities of the group outside it’s own five venues and into other venues across the Midlands region. With three disparate ageing telephone systems from Ericsson, Rockwell and Alcatel-Lucent the existing infrastructure was not capable of supporting this requirement.

The second challenge was to reduce the cost of managing, maintaining and supporting 2,500 users across five sites. With so many employees dependent on the telephone system, a resilient and reliable solution was needed.

These challenges presented the opportunity for the NEC Group to review their telephone system and contact centre solutions.

The Solution

An Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX Enterprise telephone system was implemented at the Birmingham City Centre site. This replaced the existing three ageing systems and it provided a centralised IP Telephony solution supporting all 2,500 users across all sites.



Changing a telephone system goes hand in hand with business process change, making communications both inside and outside the business seamless.

A migration plan was firstly developed so a gradual move to the new system could take place. This avoided impacting the day to day business operations and allowed ticket sales and enquiries to continue as normal. The only downtime for users was when the handsets were replaced on each desk.

A new contact centre solution was also deployed to replace the Rockwell system which had been in place for many years. With the introduction of a new ticket office – The Ticket Factory, the Alcatel-Lucent OmniTouch contact centre was the perfect complement to the new telephone system. The contact centre was rolled out to 100 staff providing them with advanced functionality to deal with calls quicker and more effectively.

With 2,500 users requiring support, the contact centre can also be used to deal with internal support calls and the same processes can be used for internal calls as external calls.

The Benefits

Standardising and centralising the communications systems have been the overriding benefits for the NEC Group. There are also many cost and productivity benefits associated with the IP solution.

Reduced costs

The new telephone system has reduced the management, maintenance and support costs of the communications infrastructure.

Greater visibility

Call statistics collated centrally give greater day to day, hour to hour and minute to minute visibility of call volumes allowing tactical decisions to be made during peak times.

Enhanced productivity

Intelligent call routing means calls to The Ticket Factory can be answered quicker allowing agents to deal with more calls in each working day.

Simplified communications processes

Internal communications between sites have been simplified while calls coming into the business are directed to the best agents to take the call.

The Future

The next step for the NEC Group is to explore the opportunities that unified communications and collaboration can open up across all five sites. With an IP communications infrastructure now in place, introducing new applications to maximise productivity is a straightforward process requiring little disruption to everyday business operations.