

## **The Acceleron Group chooses the Avaya MultiVantage IP Telephony System to help them accelerate growth plans**

### **The company**

The Acceleron Group is a rapidly-developing organisation, made up of a number of different companies which provide services including field marketing, research, hand-held technology, serviced office space and IT support for clients throughout the UK. The group has evolved from one of the original businesses, FDS Field Marketing, which had been in existence since 1981 - but the group as it stands today was formed in 2002.

They have 100 employees at their head office in Whitstable and 75 in High Wycombe, plus a further 2,000 field-based contractors who work on a freelance part-time basis. The Whitstable office houses FDS Field Marketing, Accubiz, Accuserve IT, Accusoftware and ARC, whilst Matador Intelligence and PDQ Field Marketing reside in High Wycombe.

### **The requirement**

With such a diverse organisation, good communication between group companies and offices, as well as between Acceleron employees and their clients, is paramount. Dave Roarty, Head of IT for the group of companies, explains:

*"We are a very IT-hungry organisation. We embrace technology and are always keen to investigate new technologies that can help us to do business more effectively. During my seven years with the company, I think that I have been able to make real developments in the way we use our IT systems to benefit both staff and clients.*

*One of the key areas that we have developed is of course our telecommunications capability. When I joined the original FDS business in 1998 they were using the well-established and popular INDeX system, which provided everything that they required at the time. I'm sure that eventually we would have upgraded or replaced the system as we grew, but unfortunately circumstances overtook us in August 2002 when we had a major fire at the Whitstable offices. The building was partially destroyed and had to be extensively reconstructed. A harrowing experience, but one which gave us the opportunity to re-think some of our technology decisions."*

During 2002 the company had diversified as an organisation, splitting off their IT support and software departments into separate businesses and developing other new enterprises which became part of the Acceleron Group, so a requirement to look at new technologies at this time was actually quite convenient. Dave set about looking for a telecommunications system that would cater for the needs of the group over the coming years.

*"I felt that I should look at a range of new technologies to ensure that I made the right decision. I carried out extensive research and came to the conclusion that a VoIP system was the right way forward. Then it was just a case of deciding which one to go for. I looked at the Alcatel and Cisco products and also of course the Avaya solution.*

*It very quickly came down to a decision between Cisco and Avaya. At the time Cisco were still relatively new into the telecommunications marketplace and I just did not have confidence in their understanding of, or ability to manage, voice. Whereas Avaya are well used to dealing with phone calls and had far more knowledge of the industry. I suppose you could say that I was 'buying confidence'. The Avaya MultiVantage was definitely the right solution for us."*

### **The solution**

The Acceleron Group purchased an Avaya S8300 Media Server running MultiVantage software, Avaya IP telephones and a G700 Media Gateway to link the two sites via a 2Mb leased line. They were one of the first companies in the UK to have this system installed and have experienced 100% up-time since then.

These different elements work together perfectly to deliver the many benefits which IP telephony can offer and they provide all of the flexibility and features which Dave requires. On a basic level the

Acceleron Group now have all of the enterprise telecommunications capability that you would expect, from voicemail and unified messaging to call centre and hot desking capability. They also have the ability to apply different number ranges to the different companies within the group so that their receptionists always know which name to answer the phone with! But in addition, the system offers some more sophisticated features which are invaluable to the business.

### **The benefits**

The Acceleron Group is a hugely diverse organisation, with the added complication of being split between two offices. This means that there are often occasions when staff are working from offices other than their main location. Dave explains further:

*“The ‘roving profiles’ capability is invaluable. Any user can log on to any phone at either site and immediately their entire profile is transferred to that handset. So they can work from anywhere within either site, with their incoming DDI and all of their personal handset settings right there are their fingertips. Should we open another office, it’s good to know that it will be such a simple process to add that site to our telecoms system as well. The other great thing is that we do not need a receptionist at our remote sites, as all incoming calls on the main number for each company are transferred seamlessly through to Whitstable – and of course all calls between our offices are totally free!*

*Another key benefit for us is the addition of the Avaya CT software, which has enabled us to build our own contact management system. Every detail about every incoming or outgoing customer call is recorded and stored for future reference, meaning that we always have customer information at our fingertips when we need it. Incoming calls are identified by the calling line identification (CLI) and the relevant screen from the contact management system is presented to the user before the call is even answered. With a number of large blue-chip companies to look after, we really can’t afford not to know what’s going on at all times.”*

The contact management system took eight months to build and is proving to be a vital part of the Group’s business, integrating into the existing systems which manage and schedule activity for all 2,000 of their field-based contractors. Without Avaya CT as part of the overall solution, the development of the system simply would not have been possible.

The Avaya MultiVantage also provides telecommunications services to the Acceleron Group’s serviced office clients. Each unit has full telecoms capability linked back to the main system via a virtual LAN, giving totally independent management and billing capability. With three companies in residence and a further eight units available, this is another real advantage. Dave concludes:

*“I have been extremely happy with the decision that I made. Even more so when I discovered just after installation that PC Plus magazine had made the Avaya product their ‘Editor’s Choice’! Here in Kent we have won awards for the part we play in the business community – and also for our innovative and technology-led approach to the way we work. We are currently experiencing significant growth within the company and I’m 100% confident that our Avaya telecommunications system will happily grow and develop with us over the years to come.”*