



CommuniGate Pro VoIP solution revolutionises international communications capability for leading global events company

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Darren Sundborg – Head of IT and Telecoms, UKIP Media and Events

UKIP Media and Events Ltd. is one of the leading International publishing and events companies in England and is listed in 'Europe's 500', which is the only independent pan-European listing of high growth, job-creating companies across all business sectors. The company publishes a number of award-winning magazines, including titles such as Professional Motorsport World, Automotive Testing Technology International and Business Jet Interiors International.

UKIP also runs numerous exhibitions throughout the world including the Professional Motorsport World Expo in Germany, Stadia Design & Technology in Poland and Passenger Terminal Expo in The Netherlands, as well as the Automotive Testing Expo which takes place in Germany, Detroit and Shanghai.

With staff that travel extensively, managing the company's communications ability and budget is a serious challenge. The ability to communicate with staff and customers in any part of the globe is vital, and it falls to UKIP's Head of IT and Telecoms, Darren Sundborg, to make this possible.

"Working in a global marketplace gives us a number of challenges", he explains. "For example, many US companies do not allow their staff to make international calls from their mobiles, so when we are on site at a US event, they cannot simply call one of our team if there is a problem, or if they need to arrange to meet up with one of us on site. This is just one example of the many issues we face, along with the high cost of making overseas calls as well of course!"

Darren knew that he needed to find a better way to manage UKIP's international communications, and that a Voice over IP solution was undoubtedly the answer. Having looked at a number of options, including extending his existing Mitel phone system, he turned to US-based communications software provider CommuniGate. UKIP have been using the market-leading CommuniGate Pro converged communications platform as their company-wide email server for six years, and Darren knew that there was an option to add Voice over IP to this as well.

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"I have been very happy with that solution, so this was a logical step forward", continues Darren. "CommuniGate in the US put me in touch with their UK division and I contacted them in mid 2006. We discussed UKIP's requirements and it quickly became clear that CommuniGate Pro would do the job perfectly. The UK team helped us through the consultation process and then six months later, when we were ready, they implemented the VoIP element for us as a development our existing CommuniGate Pro system."

CommuniGate in the UK provided Darren with a complete Voice over IP solution, working with Gamma Telecom to install the SIP trunks. The system currently supports 10 users but can of course be expanded as required thanks to CommuniGate Pro's complete scalability. Each user has an IP softphone client running on their laptop, providing full VoIP communications capability, whether they are in the UK or abroad.

Last but by no means least, CommuniGate also supplied a US phone number which rings at UKIP's head office in Dorking. Darren explains further about the benefits which this has provided for the business:

"With the US number, our customers and staff can ring us from anywhere in the US as an in-country call, which bypasses the problem of them not being able to make international calls. We can divert that call directly to our on-site staff member, or contact them to pass on a message or ask them to call the relevant person. Without this solution in place, the customer would only be able to get in touch with us on site by email or by physically finding the person they needed and having a face to face conversation, so it's a vast improvement for us."



The softphones on each laptop eliminate the need for any international calls to be made from hotels, which saves a significant amount of money for the company. And the same technology also enables UKIP staff to make and receive calls whilst abroad on their own office DDI, complete with all of the address books, mailboxes and personal settings which they would have available to them when sitting at their desks in the UK. It also gives them access to presence management information, so they can see when a colleague is on the phone, or out of the office, even if they are half way around the world! This vastly improves their contactability, and in turn helps UKIP to achieve a high level of customer service at all times.

Another added benefit of the CommuniGate solution is that it can be integrated with Microsoft Active Directory so that users can be set up with a single login and password. This makes life easier for them and also for the IT department. And in the future, Darren is also looking at the possibility of integrating this new VoIP solution with his existing Mitel telephone system as well.

"Everything is working very well", concludes Darren. "We now have the ability to communicate effectively throughout the world and even to bill all international calls separately thanks to the CommuniGate Pro billing platform. It's a far more 'managed' solution all round. The fact that customers can make a local US call helps us to give better service and gives them more access to us as their supplier, making us easier to do business with."



We opted for the CommuniGate route with the SIP trunks rather than a VoIP solution to add to our Mitel switch as we are convinced that this is the best way forward, and we will ultimately be more compliant in the future as the technology develops. The new system gives us this 'future proofing', as well as improved efficiency and also significant cost savings.

We have been very happy with the solution and also with the excellent and responsive service from CommuniGate in the UK. Everyone is extremely helpful, right through from 'front office' staff, who are incredibly knowledgeable even though they are not technical themselves, through to the IT guys who really know their stuff. When we call them we always get the answers we need without having to wait to wait. Any issues that do arise are dealt with swiftly so we are never in limbo. They really do get the job done."

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