Case Study

Breakthrough Breast Cancer

Forfusion's Collaborative Comms solution for Breakthrough Breast Cancer pays for itself within the first year

Collaboration

Breakthrough Breast Cancer Statistics

- → HQ in London
- → Office in Edinburgh
- → 140 users
- → 60% voluntary workforce

Forfusion's Remit

- → 3 month engagement
- → Requirements
- → Design
- → Implementation
- → Post-implementation support

Solution Components

- → Skype for Business (migrated to Teams)
- → Siemens TDM and IP ready PBX
- → QoS enabled LAN and WAN
- → Blend of hard phone and soft phones
- → Firewall permitter security
- → Site-to-site VPN for corporate traffic

Background

Breakthrough Breast Cancer is the leading breast cancer charity in the UK. It raises close to £20 million a year to support essential research into new treatments, causes, early detection and ensuring the best possible care for women diagnosed with the disease. It is famed for its direct, mass participation fund raising events.

People-centred and volunteer-based

Breakthrough Break Cancer is based in two centres 400 miles apart - London and Edinburgh. With a people-centred culture, the organisation maintained a relatively high level of staff travel between the two offices, with associated costs.

Communications Legacy

The costs of Breakthrough Breast Cancer's phone bill were being met by a benefactor, including the free provision of an old Siemens PBX system. Whilst not a direct cost, this arrangement increasingly lacked the flexibility that the organisation required to grow.

IT infrastructure challenges and requirements

Given legacy and budgetary constraints, not to mention the complexity of a predominantly voluntary workforce, Breakthrough Breast Cancer had some specific challenges to overcome regarding its IT infrastructure.

Nevertheless Paul Goodwin, Head of IT at Breakthrough Breast Cancer was deeply aware that IT held the key to improving performance at the charity. He says:

"We needed to upgrade our IT environment however we wanted to do it with minimal disruption and cost!

For an organisation like Breakthrough it's crucial that we reduce the proportion of our income spent on running the organisation versus funding research."

Instant Messaging, Desktop Collaboration and Video Conferencing

Forfusion's technical lead for Breakthrough Steven Pearson says:

"Breakthrough's initial brief was to improve employee and volunteer connectivity and collaboration without the immediate cost of replacing the legacy telephony system."

"This was achievable using IM and Desktop Collaboration tools. However, we really wanted Breakthrough to get a taste of the future!"

"We put together a proposal that included Skype for Business – and with a few concessions to budget and timelines Breakthrough added the option to enable Video Conferencing into their Comms and Collaboration suite."
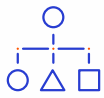
Comms and Collaboration Solution

Steven explains:

"The project was delivered in two back-to-back phases: design, followed by implementation.

Microsoft Skype for Business was built into a virtualized environment (VMware) on existing servers sited in the London office.

The solution delivery was smooth and fast – and also included the configuration of a firewall for additional security."

Collaborative Comms Benefits

Within a fortnight, 140 users were enabled across the two offices at a total cost of £11k. This included £8k for services plus around £3k for licenses. By eliminating internal travel costs however, this expense paid for itself within a single financial year.

Given the charity's funding aims this is a very important factor. However, more importantly, the Communications solution has enabled staff to work together far more effectively than before in three key ways:

→ 01 Finding people

Microsoft Skype for Business works with Active Directory, which from a user perspective means that anyone can look up anyone else on the system. This is a big boost for a company with 60% of its workforce changing intermittently.

→ 02 Knowing availability

Busy/Free indicators of Presence linked to Calendars enable workers to see when the best time is to schedule meetings or just pick up the phone.

→ 03 Direct communication

Instant messaging enables a rapid contact. Upgrading that to a person-to-person video conference can be done in a single click.

New Possibilities

With an eye on the future, the Microsoft Skype for Business implementation has enabled Paul Goodwin to take the first steps towards resolving two other issues on the horizon.

→ 01 The aging PBX phone system, that would undoubtedly make any major change quite difficult.

→ 02 The increasing appetite of staff, especially volunteers, to use their own devices – smartphones, tablets or PCs – with the inherent security risks that accompany it.

Client Feedback

The last word goes to Paul Goodwin: "Forfusion is very professional in approach. Their knowledge of the subject and the ability to come up with solutions to problems very quickly was excellent."

" Working with Forfusion was a very positive customer experience."

Paul Goodwin
Head of IT

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