



## DELFONT MACKINTOSH Multi-Vendor IP Telephony and Call Centre Solution

### EMERGENCY PLANNING, DISASTER RECOVERY AND OVERSPILL CAPACITY – JUST THREE OF THE SIDE BENEFITS ENJOYED BY DELFONT MACKINTOSH WHEN THEY MOVED THEIR TELEPHONY TO AN IP BASED PLATFORM.

*“The Actimax solution has provided the efficiency, flexibility and scalability improvements we were targeting as well as improving the customer experience when they call to make a booking”*

*Douglas McKenzie Chief Financial Officer– Delfont Mackintosh Theatres Ltd*

When you're investing millions of pounds in capital refurbishment projects over several years, across sites in different locations, it's essential that any opportunities for economies of scale or improved working efficiency are explored and capitalised on at the same time.

That's exactly what Delfont Mackintosh Theatres, the operator of many of London's most prestigious theatres has been quietly achieving over the past few years.

Delfont Mackintosh is owned by Cameron Mackintosh and operates seven theatres in London's West End. The Prince Edward, Prince of Wales and the Novello Theatre have all undergone major refurbishment and restoration, with updating of the Noël Coward theatre, Wyndham's, Queen's and Gielgud ongoing.

**But it wasn't just the floorboards and seating that were creaking and showing their age.**

The telecommunications systems within the business were also struggling to cope with modern day demands.

With all sites operating stand-alone systems, there was no sharing of information between them, and there was no central management of the system. The old Nortel Meridian equipment was antiquated and couldn't offer networking capabilities. This resulted in duplication of

management time and costs, plus a missed opportunity to benefit from bulk purchasing economies.

Delfont recognised that significant efficiency gains would be realised by centralising their IT, and speeding up the booking process. For example, IT staff were frequently travelling from site to site to make changes that were required at each individual location.

In addition, call handling and booking operations were limited by the number of operators at any one location, with no ability to take advantage of under-utilised staff at other theatres during peak demand periods.

#### **Eliminating Business Risk**

Without a robust network, if a theatre line went down it meant there was no contingency plan, and the theatre was not contactable. In effect, the business would grind to a halt until alternative arrangements could be made at the network level. Likewise, the same risk was exposed if there was a problem with the system hardware.

Whilst the refurbishment of theatres was already underway, when telecoms consultant BDO Stoy Hayward were invited to look at the overall business processes, they immediately identified opportunities to take advantage of voice and data convergence.

The business was looking to update their data links between theatres to utilise centralised servers for booking applications (CITRIX). This led on to linking sites for voice and a VOIP solution was required to take advantage of the new WAN infrastructure and increased bandwidth.

#### **The advantages of a scalable solution**

One of the key drivers of the appointment of Actimax as the systems integrator was their ability to scale-up the chosen platform across the consistently growing number of sites in the Delfont Mackintosh Group. The Mitel 3300

IP PBX was recommended as it has enhanced IP networking functionality, and was coupled with the multi-site capabilities of the Mitel 6100 Contact Centre.

Other reasons for the appointment of Actimax was their ability to deliver the added functionality of voicemail, desk-top fax (via an AVST RightFax server) and a powerful Call Management system. A centrally-based Proteus solution (from CTI Data) logs fixed line, mobile and internet usage across all sites, and provides the information needed to hold down the total cost of ownership.

### **How to have confidence when integrating critical operating systems**

Because fast, efficient reservation, ticketing and customer service are *right at the centre* of the Delfont Mackintosh operations, the implementation of the telephony at each and every site has to spot-on.

So, the final piece of the Actimax jig-saw was their **systematic approach to integration**. This was demonstrated via a site visit to London Borough of Enfield, coupled with the fact that Actimax rigorously tested the various components of the solution *on its own premises* for any compatibility issues between the various vendor's components.

*“When looking for a supplier of our systems it was important that the chosen supplier could actually deliver what they had promised and this has proved to be the case with Actimax.”*

*Douglas McKenzie Chief Financial Officer– Delfont Mackintosh Theatres Ltd*

By following a staged approach to the integration, with the IP PBX and call centre platform installed first, followed by the call management system, then fax and unified messaging servers, the IT department at Delfont Mackintosh have had the time to be properly trained by Actimax engineers on each area of the solution. Most recently they have added network routing with Non-Geographic Numbers to simplify the booking and enquiry process for customers.

Individual sites were added to the system to coincide either with a theatre's refurbishment, or when a show came to the end of its run. In order to minimise disruption, all work was undertaken out of hours -- not easy in a theatre, taking into account rehearsals, matinees and evening performances! With an average implementation taking two weeks to deliver, training was given on-site to users, supervisors and system administrators.

Whilst it's not quite a 24/7 operation, the theatre business is fast-moving, with constant pressure on providing an exciting and rewarding theatre-going experience.

Efficient telecoms is central to delivering on high customer expectations, and to support this, Actimax provide a maintenance service around the clock. Actimax also provide and monitor all of their lines, least cost routing and their NGNs, so providing a complete one stop shop.

### **Benefits from day-to-day efficiencies and functionality**

A key objective of Delfont Mackintosh's partnership with Actimax was to *improve the day-to-day working efficiency* of any staff using the new telecoms system.

During busy periods overflow calls can be sent to another theatre to be answered, which means that calls are now answered quicker for bookings and enquiries. This, along with the Interactive Voice Recognition, has improved speed and efficiency in providing information such as performance times and responses to Frequently Asked Questions.

The working flexibility of the system has allowed Delfont Mackintosh to grow significantly without large increases in staff numbers, or jumps in running costs.

When changes are required at an individual site (such as updated IVR messages or moves and changes to users on the system), this can now be done from one location. Global changes can also be made without the need to visit all of the theatres.

### **Important side-benefits of disaster recovery and emergency contingency planning**

The straight-forward flexibility of Actimax's solution means that system changes can *quickly* be made in the event of an emergency or cancelled show; with changes made in-house staff can be very responsive and react with immediate effect.

For example if a theatre is closed due to fire, flooding, transport disruptions or a security alert, all calls can be redirected and handled by another location within a matter of minutes.

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*Douglas McKenzie Chief Financial Officer– Delfont Mackintosh Theatres Ltd*

For More Information on Actimax and the services we offer please contact us:

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