

# Good show for convergence

**A major refurbishment programme for its London theatres provided Delfont Mackintosh with the perfect opportunity to upgrade its communications infrastructure. The result is a new multi-vendor IP telephony and call centre solution running on a bullet-proof network.**

**T**hink theatres, think West End shows, and certainly mission-critical communications isn't the next phrase that springs to mind. But for Delfont Mackintosh - the company that owns and operates some of London's most prestigious theatres - telephony is at the heart of its business, with the majority of tickets sold through its box offices over the phone.

It's aiming to take the theatre-going experience in London to a new level in the next couple of years with ambitious restoration and refurbishment plans for a number of sites. And at the same time it has implemented a centralised IP-based communications solution to provide extra functionality, scalability and improved total cost of ownership.

Previously, each theatre ran a stand alone Nortel Meridian system, with the Symposium call centre solution for box office functions. The refurbishment programme meant that the existing telephony infrastructure could not remain as it was, plus a new WAN with LES 10 circuits connecting the theatres provided plenty of bandwidth and the opportunity to move to a centrally managed system.

## Experience counts

The solution was specified by telecoms consultancy BDO Stoy Hayward with the focus on adding functionality such as voicemail and fax to the desktop, extra resilience for each box office through overflow and disaster recovery capabilities and reduced total cost of ownership.

Essex-based integrator Actimax was chosen to supply the solution with its

proposal of a Mitel 3300 IP PBX at the central site plus the Mitel 6100 call centre platform linking to the other theatres via the new WAN. A centrally-based Proteus Integrated Call Management system from CTI Data logs fixed line, mobile and Internet usage, and a RightFax server provides fax capability.

Damian Eleftheriou, lead consultant on the project at BDO Stoy Hayward, says that although the solution was always quite likely to be IP, demonstrable customer support and experience in integrating converged solutions was also crucial.

"The Actimax proposal was particularly strong in the areas of resilience and disaster recovery, scalability, and total cost of

followed by the call management system, fax and unified messaging servers ensured that Delfont Mackintosh's IT department had time to be properly trained on each area of the solution.

The issue of scalability was also one that could not be brushed over lightly. When plans were first made, the company operated The Prince Edward, Prince of Wales and Strand theatres. The Queens theatre was added to the list after work on the project had begun.

Further scalability is essential, as Delfont Mackintosh will also take over operations at The Albery and Wyndham theatres in September 2005, and the Gielgud theatre in January 2006. Eleftheriou says that the way

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acquisition and ownership of the solution. Our due diligence had rated Actimax's expertise in providing converged solutions - and its approach to implementation, customer service and support - very highly. This has turned out to be quite correct."

He says that the subsequent implementation stands out because of how smoothly it ran. Actimax rigorously tested the various parts of the solution on its premises for any compatibility issues between the various vendors' components.

A staged approach to the integration, with the IP PBX and call centre platform first,

the solution is designed adding new sites to the network is inexpensive without being risky or time-consuming. Testament to this is how easily the Queens Theatre was added to the plans.

John Massey, MD at Actimax, concludes: "To provide the best solution for Delfont Mackintosh involved the selection and integration of a multi-vendor converged solution which we managed to integrate seamlessly. We are very pleased with the final solution"

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