

## HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES Collaboration and Hot Desking on Multiple Sites

### HOW ACTIMAX IS BRINGING 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY COMMUNICATIONS TO HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES



Hampton Court Palace

*“HRP asked Actimax to help update our systems & make working at multiple sites easier for our team. Staff are now happily 'freeseating' with their new telephone numbers from site to site. This means that staff have just one 'office' telephone number & one voicemail to manage.”*

*Barbara Crow IS Projects Manager – HRP*

Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) is an independent charity responsible for the care, conservation and presentation to the public of the unoccupied royal palaces.

As a major organisation within the leisure industry, they are responsible for hugely popular tourist attractions such as **the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, Kensington Palace, The Banqueting House, Kew Palace and Queen Charlotte's Cottage.**

In looking after nearly a thousand years of British Royal History, the age and uniqueness of the assets

under their care was also proving to be one of their **biggest liabilities** in maintaining and running a profitable 21<sup>st</sup> Century business.

In particular their telephone communication systems were seriously out-dated, with **eight different telephone systems employed** across each of the six locations, which were run as separate sites.

#### Key operational problems caused by out-dated telephone systems:

- **Handling enquiries** from tourists and visitors trying to book tickets or check opening times was unacceptably slow, with too many calls being lost before they could be answered.
- **Call charges** were invoiced by several different providers, which was adding to the administration and meant the organisation was losing out on savings from aggregated purchasing.
- **Management staff** had different log-ins at different sites and were not connected at all to their personal telephone lines. This meant that accessing messages and network resources was slow or even impossible, so restricting work effectiveness.
- There was **no means of document sharing** between locations or easy collaboration on work projects. This led to additional travelling of staff between sites, and the slower progress of projects that were difficult to work on simultaneously with colleagues.
- Whilst staff did have personal DDI numbers, these were based on different telephone systems, with **no consistency between locations, and with no central directory.** This inevitably hindered communications between staff, and made the passing-on of messages more difficult.

## A Blueprint for Efficient Communications

Historic Royal Palaces had already prepared a wish list of functionality and business objectives that its new system had to deliver. This included several key business system changes which the chosen telecoms contractor needed to build-in to any proposed solution:

- ⇒ The six separate sites had to be serviced by a central integrated system and take advantage of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) to link each of the sites together seamlessly. This would deliver much simpler system administration and enable call costs between sites to be reduced and closely monitored from then on.
- ⇒ Reduced call charges for external calls was a key priority, taking advantage of the combined volume of calls from all sites to drive down rates.
- ⇒ Appropriate infrastructure and support for a number of **staff who needed to work at different sites** meant that a flexible, user-friendly approach was essential for the new solution to work.
- ⇒ Seating capacity within each location had to be improved, but without the option of simply squeezing in more work stations. How could their telecoms solution help deliver this?!
- ⇒ Fast access to voice and data networks was also needed to support **easier collaboration** between workers at different sites. This would allow working together on different projects, **sharing information and documents, and integrate the existing IT Wide Area Network** into the project so that the systems would work seamlessly together.
- ⇒ With the many thousands of visitors each year to



the six sites, it was critical that the communication solution **remained stable** and able to comfortably handle seasonal surges in traffic. This also meant that an established, long-term supply partner was required to provide **fast, ongoing technical support and consultancy**.

- ⇒ Finally, with sites of such a prestigious nature, it was extremely important that the **security of the proposed system** was never going to be compromised, and that back-up operating systems were built-in to the final solution.

### Site Survey's and User Needs Analysis

The ability to design and cost an appropriate and comprehensive system that would **deliver the performance and reliability required**, relied heavily on the quality and thoroughness of the site survey's.

The technical and physical survey included *carefully* checking cabling running through listed buildings up to 500 years old, plus assessing all existing handsets, switches and hubs.

To ensure that there were no problems with regard to bandwidth provision, a Viola VoIP test between all sites was carried out which made certain there would be no problems in implementing the **VoIP networking between sites**.

User competences were also researched, with interviews carried out by Actimax to compliment user surveys carried out by the telecoms department of HRP before the installation.

### Recommendation for a Winning System

After careful analysis of the **business needs** for the new telecoms system, combined with HRP's wish list and the skills base of the users, Actimax recommended the implementation of an integrated Alcatel OmniPCX Enterprise voice system using VoIP between sites.

Another key part of the solution was **My Teamwork collaboration**, a solution between sites to enable users to Audio Conference, Video Conference and Document Share between staff at different sites.

A third strand of the recommended solution was to implement **Hot Desking**, to enable users to move from site to site seamlessly, using their single user name and password log-in, which solved their issue of uniformity of systems and processes.

The Hot Desking solution also resolved the internal seating capacity issues for the large but variable numbers of staff working from each location.

The only real benefits of implementing **VoIP** was in networking each of the sites together. The only site that had CAT5 cabling was the Tower, and to have replaced the Hampton Court Palace cabling with CAT5, or introduce it to the other listed buildings would have been extremely difficult. The digital solution with VoIP linking and networking all of the sites together was a major advantage.

The solution also uses **Central Administration and Call Management** based at Hampton Court Palace. This means that Administrators can now add or move users, monitor call costs, review usage patterns, and resolve problems quickly from a single point, without having to call in an outside maintenance service to do any system administration.

### How To Deliver Seamless Integration Of Modern Telephony For 1200 Staff, Across Six Sites, Within A 48 Hour Timescale...

The **Key Factor For Success** in this highly complex solution resided in the *meticulous planning and attention to detail* before the installation ever began. The planning for the project took 3 months with ten meetings for detailed assessment, and the implementation took a further 6 months.



*“Expert planning and project management ensured that almost all problems and pit-falls had been overcome before implementation began.”*

**John Massey** Managing Director – Actimax



As 24/7 sites the Tower and Hampton Court could not be disturbed during the installation, and all six locations have MOD presence with bespoke systems that needed to be connected using extremely old DC5, DC10 and AC15 circuits.

### Providing a seamless change over

Each site required detailed project management involving multiple teams for 3 weeks preparing for the change over. This was delivered during a week day night to minimise disruption to users. The order of the implementation was dictated by HRP, with the Tower of London installed first because it was seen as potentially the most troublesome system.

The legacy system of extremely old technology added complexity, together with an existing IVR system which also needed to be integrated into the final system.

To overcome the **very tight time frame** for the changeover from the old to the new platform, a process called '**double jumpering**' was used, where both the old and the new system were connected together, and then the old system was disconnected.

This solution enabled the change over to be performed **over-night within 5 hours** for the main users, and the following day the remaining users were changed over.

Considering the size of the sites, which had **over 500 people at each location**, this was a considerable achievement to undertake in such a small time period, and is a testament to the outstanding service and support of the Actimax engineers.

### Effective User Training – The Hidden Lynch-Pin In Delivering A Successful Outcome

Initially a full survey of requirements was undertaken to identify and agree who would be responsible for each area of administration on the system.



Kensington Palace

An extensive training plan was agreed over a phased timetable to ensure no disruption to their working day, and the staff were then split into four user types:

1. Operator Training for the group of operators manning the call centre at the Tower of London and Hampton Court Palace.
2. System Administration, including both the Alcatel System Administration and the Network Administration.
3. “Super Users” to help with the End User Training, received frequently asked questions as well as easy to use crib sheets
4. End User Training

The End User **training of over a thousand people** was carefully staged, and timed to be near to the installation to make sure staff didn't forget what they had learned.

A number of laminated, easy to use guides were also provided to ensure that the staff had a quick check list, and technical website information and frequently asked questions were downloaded onto HRP's intranet.

The plan consisted of 45 man-days, and at each stage of the completed training the team were checked for competencies. The result of this **professional training programme** was a seamless change-over of all the systems, which proceeded without any significant problems.

### Results Achieved

- ⇒ HRP now has an integrated solution, which enables it to manage all sites from one interface, without outside assistance. This has **reduced system administration time and improved the speed of fault resolution.**

- ⇒ All services are now coordinated by Actimax, who provide **one point of contact** for call charges, telephone systems and maintenance for all sites.
- ⇒ **Call charges have been reduced quite significantly** by the use of better Least Cost Routing and there have been some savings since linking the systems together.
- ⇒ Actimax provide robust 24 x 7 maintenance and technical support, with a **4 hour response time** for major breakdowns.
- ⇒ All the operators are now in one site at Hampton Court and act as Call Centre operators for the whole system. Call handling has been improved over the whole group, with calls being **answered more quickly**, and calls between sites are now at **zero cost**.
- ⇒ Staff that move between sites are now able to easily communicate with the rest of the palaces. The “My Teamwork” collaboration suite enables users to Audio Conference, Video Conference and Document Share between different sites, **easily** and with **great simplicity**.
- ⇒ All users can now log on anywhere on the network, and Hot Desking is possible at any site, **optimising the use of available office space**.
- ⇒ All users can now access the web directory which is located on HRP's Intranet, making the information available across the whole group.

The organisation now has a state of the art communication system connected to a number of legacy older systems, which is unique in the country. These results have been delivered with no disruption to site security or management and staff.

Actimax has provided an integrated and comprehensive solution for Historic Royal Palaces which also accommodates its future plans for improvement and expansion.

*“Actimax achieved all of the requirements for Historic Royal Palaces and the end result was a complete success”*

**John Massey** Managing Director – Actimax

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