



CASE STUDY:

SEDGEMOOR DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW

Local Government

GOALS

Driving operational efficiencies and delivering higher quality services to the public

SOLUTIONS

Enghouse Interactive
Communications Center & Quality
Management Suite

BENEFITS

- Collaborative working through Skype for Business brings visibility across the organisation
- Increased flexibility to the contact centre by supporting remote working
- Integration of Quality Management technology allows real-time review of best practise, ensuring quality of service is at its highest
- Greater public confidence as calls get routed quickly to knowledgeable staff

District Council Transforms its Customer Service thanks to Enghouse Interactive Communications Center and Microsoft Skype for Business

BACKGROUND

Sedgemoor District Council is focused on driving operational efficiencies and in delivering higher-quality services to the public. In carrying out this objective, the council was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with its existing contact centre solution. It had effectively outgrown it. The solution was hooked into a primary analogue circuit PBX which was rapidly becoming obsolete. Added to that, the council had issues with the sound quality on calls which was inevitably starting to impact customer service. It needed a modern interface to support its unified communications approach and it wanted to ensure its whole platform was fully Skype compatible.

Since installing Enghouse Interactive Communications Center (EICC) in a Microsoft Skype for Business (SfB) environment, the council has transformed the way it interacts with the public. The reliability of the new system, which was up and running in two weeks means callers are quickly routed to the most appropriate agent, in turn enhancing their confidence in the council. By transitioning to a digital environment and adopting the highly efficient EICC solution, the council is able to process a higher volume of calls in the call centre. Callers benefit from a reduction in waiting times and from having their issues and queries resolved more quickly.

CONTACT US :

Imperium, Imperial Way
Reading, RG2 0TD
Tel: +44 203 357 3040

“The main quality of EICC that impressed us from the beginning was that we could integrate it with SfB”

Gareth Denslow, Contact Centre Manager
SEDGEMOOR DISTRICT COUNCIL

MAKING THE MOVE

Sedgemoor District Council was formed in 1974. Today, it includes 54 parish and town councils containing a mixture of small towns and rural villages, incorporating approximately 55,000 households. Like most regional authorities, it is focused on 'doing more with less' and effectively delivering the best possible customer experience and optimum level of service to its citizens. With this in mind, it recognised the need to bring its contact centre up to date with a modern interface to support its unified communications approach, remote working capability and a platform that was fully Skype compatible.

With concerns about its contact centre getting stronger all the time, the council put out a tender. It was looking for a more flexible, versatile solution that could integrate to a Skype for Business (SfB) capability, support remote working, provide improved access to the public to the council's services and yet would still be cheaper to run than the council's existing contact centre solution.

After reviewing several options, the council elected to deploy Enghouse Interactive Communications Center (EICC), in a Microsoft SfB environment, a modular, feature-rich solution for contact centre communications, enabling users to add functionality as requirements and budget allow.

According to Gareth Denslow, Sedgemoor District Council contact centre manager: "The main quality of EICC that impressed us from the beginning was that we could integrate it with SfB. We had just rolled out SfB across the whole business so it was key that the chosen solution had this capability. In terms of the pitch, it came across clearly that the system was easy to use. That was key because we wanted our agents to enjoy using the solution and get up and running on it quickly. It was also important that the chosen solution was in some ways a like for like one. We wanted something that users would be familiar with but that nevertheless delivered all the quality that we were looking for and allowed us to bring on new functionality as and when we needed it."

Sedgemoor District Council was keen to get the system up and running quickly. Working with Enghouse Interactive and the in-house council team, unified communications specialist, Exactive rose to the challenge and carried out the implementation smoothly and efficiently on-premise and the whole process was completed within two weeks. All the main project milestones were hit, and go live followed hard on the heels of the installation itself. Prior to its work on the EICC implementation, Exactive had already installed SfB at Sedgemoor District Council and that familiarity and prior experience helped to streamline the rapid roll-out.

The implementation took place across two separate contact centres: the main council centre, which is responsible for dealing with enquiries from the public relating to a wide range of services including council tax, business rates; planning and building and environmental health; and also, a separate Homes in Sedgemoor facility. The latter is responsible for looking after council house stock and in total looks after nearly 4,200 properties on behalf of the council. Usage of the installed systems is shared across the two centres, and at peak times calls to Homes in Sedgemoor can overflow into the main council facility, reducing wait times for residents.

The ease of use of EICC coupled with the council's eagerness to get started meant that the training process was brief and focused. A train the trainer approach was adopted. Since go live, the system has been working efficiently and support calls into the Enghouse Interactive and Exactive teams have been low. When support has been required, however, the response has been efficient and effective.

REAPING THE REWARDS

The new Enghouse Interactive EICC system has brought a raft of benefits to the council. The integration with Skype for Business helps deliver more collaborative working and drives efficiency and productivity between the contact centre and the whole organisation.

One of the most significant long-term advantages of the newly implemented solution is the ability to support flexible remote access. The new solution is in itself more resilient than the old. Sedgemoor are currently rolling out Windows 10 based laptops to all customer service agents and for the first time will allow agents the opportunity to work in a flexible virtual world and keep working, even if there is a power cut that impacts the main council facilities.

The switch to a less expensive digital approach and the use of the Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) to support voice over IP (VoIP) functionality helps reduce costs for the council and therefore enables it to increase the number of voice lines coming into the contact centre and increase customer delivery access.

According to Denslow: "this is key for us as it increases the confidence the public has in the service we provide. Callers increasingly know that we have a reliable phone system in place and that access is quick and easy. We believe that they are already becoming more satisfied in the way that their queries are being dealt with and we expect to see that trend continue over time."

Added to this, call volumes are up and thanks to the integration with Skype for Business, call times have been reduced as agents can route calls through to subject matter experts much more quickly than before. As an added benefit of the integration with SfB, SfB presence allows the agents to see who is available prior to call transfer, reducing wait and waste in the overall process. The council has also been able to reduce licensing costs since installing the new system and call costs have dropped off as a result of the move from analogue ISDN to SIP provision.

In addition to EICC, the council also makes use of the Enghouse Interactive Quality Management Suite (QMS) which enables it to monitor calls and review reports to ensure that the quality of service provided is always at the highest possible level. As Denslow explains: "once again the big benefit for us is ease of use. The solution makes it easy to listen and review calls to ensure that the quality of service we are providing is satisfactory. Equally, as time has gone by, we have found the reporting function to be intuitive and very handy to have – especially when we get asked to provide data around call volumes and call types."

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

Looking ahead, the council has now rolled out web chat functionality on the EICC platform and integration on the corporate website, although it is not currently in active usage.

Denslow was impressed with the help Enghouse provided in implementing the capability. "Enghouse were very patient and flexible in the approach they took to implementing the product. We are confident that they will be equally helpful if we have any queries when it does go live."

Craig Wilkins, head of information systems at the council, highlights another way in which the system is likely to evolve in the future. "By 2018, we are looking at replacing our contact centre CRM system and implementing a new one across the entire organisation. When we do that, integration with EICC will add a range of additional capabilities including screen popping, email routing/SMS, thereby increasing the range of options available to contact centre agents and also the quality of service that can be delivered to the public. With the help of EICC, we are looking forward confidently to the future."

ABOUT ENGHOUSE INTERACTIVE

Enghouse Interactive's integrated suite of solutions includes multi-channel contact centre, self-service, attendant operator consoles and workforce optimisation. This wide portfolio places us in the unique position to offer customers and partners a complete, fully featured solution from a single vendor. These solutions support the full range of deployment methods from premise-based to private, public or community cloud and even hybrid requirements.