



9th September 2015

Plymouth Citizens Advice Bureau have been working with BDR Voice & data for the last seven years and in that time have developed an established contact centre for Plymouth and the surrounding area.

The analogue telephone system which we had in place had become outdated, and was not servicing our requirements as the increase in call volumes into the Bureau steadily increased.

Our brief to BDR was to provide additional handsets so that we could better manage our daily activities.

However when we spoke to Graham Hartle, we were presented with an alternative option that would better serve our requirements, provide a significant cost saving and also help to route all inbound enquiries through one central platform.

We had encountered several difficulties with the analogue system, such as training. As a charity we need to ensure that we have enough volunteer agents on board to be able to accommodate the needs of the general public. Training new agents was becoming increasingly difficult. To do this we had to use 'splitter' cables and multiple headsets, so that more than one person at any time could listen in to a phone call.

There also existed the issue of voicemail. If a device had messages stored in its memory, these would be lost in the event of a power cut.

We also struggled with not having in place an IVR solution so that in the event the office may be closed; After business hours, during a holiday period etc. A member of the public could still receive emergency advice and support via an automated system.

Cost was also a huge consideration for us at this time. Line rental in addition to other costs associated with the old system meant we were paying a premium price for a solution that wasn't serving the needs of the business. All of these factors were taken into consideration, and BDR were able to provide a solution that would offer substantial cost savings for the charity.

Visibility was also factored into the brief we gave to BDR. At present we had no way of monitoring how well the contact centre was performing aligned with the volume of calls that we were receiving. We couldn't either manage nor measure. The solution proposed to us could offer an application that would allow us to monitor and report upon the calls coming into the centre, how many calls may have been handled by a particular agent etc.

And alternative inbound contact could not be effectively routed into the contact centre, such as emails or live chat. We were dealing with a multitude of calls, emails, live chat without being able to prioritise them as they came into the centre. This was proving difficult for the volunteer teams and could at times affect morale as the volumes increased. The solution on offer also provided a method of us being able to deal with our communications, efficiently on a daily basis.



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BDR therefore were able to provide a better performing solution, that could manage all inbound communications through one central channel, enable us to be able to monitor and measure how well we were performing as a charity and also address our issues of dealing with enquiries when received out of business hours. The solution also provided us with massive cost savings of over 50%. The likes of which we were now able to channel into other critical areas of the business to ensure that we were able to continue to offer a first class advice service to people who desperately needed our help.

The transition needed to be seamless with zero downtime. We have 12 volunteers who deal with high levels of calls and enquiries on a daily basis. Graham Hartle project managed the entire process from proposition through to implementation. The change over went very well. We managed to switch from our old analogue system onto a SIP system without issue or any down time that affected our ability to continue to operate effectively.

In all, since the new platform has been put in place our productivity levels have increased. Whilst the volume of inbound enquiries has also gradually increased our ability to manage the increase has improved as we have the ability to channel certain enquiries/numbers through to a specific destination/volunteer. The enquiries can also be dealt with according to their priority/when they were received, so a mixture of calls, emails and live chat can all be channelled effectively and efficiently. More importantly, the new solution has saved us several thousand pounds and we continue to receive an excellent support service from BDR Voice & Data Solutions.

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