

FEATUREPLUS

CASE STUDY

Garden centre chain gains professional telephony service whilst saving on call costs.



Country Homes and Gardens plc is a chain of garden centres that is growing rapidly, acquiring mid-sized independent centres and incorporating them into the chain. They currently have 13 garden centres around the Home Counties and the Midlands and a head office at Winnersh near Reading.

THE CHALLENGE

A large proportion of the garden centres' phone bills were for calls to other garden centres and to the head office; a solution was required that eliminated these internal call costs. Each garden centre has 6 or 7 extensions that are cordless phones in the individual departments. The handsets themselves are extremely vulnerable to the environment in the garden centre – everything is watered twice a day and sometimes the handsets get watered too! A further requirement was for each department extension to have a DDI on the local telephone exchange. Finally, it was important that the solution should be easy and quick to implement at new garden centres as they were acquired.

The conventional solution would be to provide PBXs at each centre, networked with the head office and with DECT servers providing full roaming for the extensions. The cost of implementing this was estimated and deemed to be prohibitively expensive.

THE APPROACH

Each garden centre was allocated 7 FeaturePlus lines; one connected to a desk-phone in the office and 6 connected to ruggedised analogue DECT handsets. The cordless handsets' antennas were installed in the roofs of the garden centres so as to provide coverage in the department's own area. The antennas were wired back to the FeaturePlus ATA that was located in the garden centre's office.



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The main phone number for each garden centre was presented on the office FeaturePlus line and was programmed, via the web portal, to ring the other 6 handsets at the same time so that every incoming call to the main number would ring all the phones in the garden centre. If the call was not answered it would go to the office phone's FeaturePlus voicemail - *this feature is unique to FeaturePlus*.

Short codes were set up in the FeaturePlus directory for all 93 FeaturePlus lines to facilitate transferring calls between sites. In addition, the garden centre managers' mobiles were also set up as short codes in the FeaturePlus account.

The head office was provided with 8 channels of Gamma's SIP trunk service, IPDirectConnect which connected to its Avaya PBX. This service was provided under the same contract as the garden centre FeaturePlus lines so that calls between any head office extension and any garden centre extension were free of call charges.

Finally, the solution installed was scalable; allowing further implementations at any new garden centres in around 10 working days, provided broadband is already present.



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The solution developed by Logic ICT and Uniworld deploying FeaturePlus and IP DirectConnect in this way has fulfilled every aspect of the requirement defined by Country Homes and Gardens.

“The capital cost of implementing the solution is a fraction (around one third) of building a “conventional” solution yet by using IP telephony all the functionality can still be provided. While the cost savings are impressive, what is really great about this solution is the way Country Homes and Gardens can manage calls to give its customers far better service than any of its competitors can.”

David Holtby of Logic ICT