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ShoreTel and The Royal Agricultural Society of England

Royal Agricultural Society of England Gains a Cash Cow with ShoreTel

The Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE) plays a leading role in the development of British agriculture and a vibrant rural economy through the uptake of good science, the promotion of best practice and a co-ordinated, impartial approach to wide-ranging rural issues. Today their work includes support for business and social welfare in rural communities, education, and a wide portfolio of shows and events.

CHALLENGE

- Upgrade an aging digital telephony system in time for an office relocation to add flexibility and improve the Society's services.

SOLUTION:

- A 230-user ShoreTel deployment including ShoreTel Voice Switches and ShoreTel IP Telephones with ShoreTel Call Manager, workgroups, hunt groups, Softphone and Office Anywhere.

BENEFITS:

- Ease of deployment and use resulted in timely and efficient implementation and employee training.

- Distributed architecture and single-image deployment enable IT staff to centrally manage the system.

- Switchboard operators can respond to many inquiries independently and without external support.

- ShoreTel Call Manager helps improve service by ensuring missed calls are monitored and returned.

- The time to deploy a new extension has been reduced by 75%, and it now takes only 10 minutes to install a new line for exhibitors.

From fields of primroses to cottages of cream teas, the English Countryside continues to inspire poets and horticulturalists alike. It's also an important resource for agriculture and related industries throughout England. Since 1840, the Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE) has helped support farming and the rural industries by spreading information about the best in research, development and practice. Today this means bringing the best of British agriculture to the attention of members and the wider rural industries through shows, events, conferences and awards.

Ensuring the right information is shared with those who need it, and events are efficiently managed depends on reliable and effective communications. However, the Society's old digital Philips telephony system was rapidly approaching its end of life, and required an

increasing amount of technical expertise for routine tasks, such as moving around phone lines and adding users.

Sometimes technical difficulties had to be resolved with outside help which proved time-consuming and costly. The Society also was planning to relocate, and needed a new system in place when moving to the new offices. Migration to unified communications was viewed as a long-term communications strategy at RASE, and Stewart Page, Assistant Director of ICT, took the opportunity to familiarise himself with the UC market when attending a UC tradeshow in London.

ShoreTel makes UC a reality for nonprofits

"When we first started hearing about UC, we assumed it was beyond our budget and

resource capabilities," Mr Page explained. "After comparing different product demos, however, the ShoreTel solution proved to be more cost-effective and easy-to-manage than we first believed, and certainly more so than their competitors."

The RASE IT team decided the time was right for UC with ShoreTel, and engaged Voyager Networks, a ShoreTel partner, to design the solution to be deployed across four locations at RASE's 250-acre Stoneleigh Park. Because of the rural location, RASE also needed analogue functionality for extensions to remote areas around the site.

"The Voyager team designed the ShoreTel solution with all the components we needed and room to grow," Mr Page said. "The project management team guided deployment smoothly through to completion within the timeframe planned. We had to make the transition over one weekend and the switch to the new system worked excellently thanks to our team effort with ShoreTel and Voyager Networks."

Staff improves efficiency with ShoreTel's ease of use

The 230-user ShoreTel deployment at RASE includes ShoreTel Voice Switches models E1k, 120 and 90, and a Dell PowerEdge R200 server. RASE also deployed ShoreTel IP telephones, models IP 230 and IP 115, and uses the full suite of ShoreTel Call Manager applications—ShoreTel Professional Call Manger, ShoreTel Operator Call Manager and ShoreTel Personal Call Manager—depending on the communication requirements of each user's role.

All RASE users attended a two-day training session, and Voyager Networks provided "flaw walkers" on-site during the first few days to ensure smooth migration and speedy troubleshooting. "Our employees love the new system. Despite the varying levels of IT literacy, they have all embraced ShoreTel technology due to its ease of use," Mr Page said.

RASE staff are taking full advantage of features such as Workgroups, Office Anywhere and Huntgroups to improve efficiency and get more done. Workgroups helps them monitor and return missed calls, which is especially valuable in busy periods during exhibitions. Office Anywhere lets them assign their extensions to any phone for when they're working remotely, and Huntgroups routes calls to multiple extensions to help ensure no calls are missed.

"ShoreTel also has reduced the time necessary to deploy a new extension by 75 percent," Mr Page added. "It now takes only 10 minutes to install a new line for exhibitors, thereby improving the flexibility of RASE customer services. By eliminating the old system, we've taken back a whole equipment room, thus saving on space and cooling costs by having one less air conditioner."

In-house system management saves time and money

Users of the ShoreTel system are spread out across Stoneleigh Park where immediate access to buildings is often restricted. Remote administrative management and troubleshooting through a Web browser help save time and reduce costs. Thanks to the system's single image architecture and the ease of system management, switchboard operators can solve many issues independently without external support.

The return on investment of the ShoreTel deployment was realized within a few months of migration. The new system also allows RASE to improve management of

the RASE sales team's performance. Sales representatives are given key performance indicators based on the number of calls they handle, and for the first time the organization can measure call volume and set targets in line with business objectives.

The ShoreTel solution represents an excellent platform for further development to meet the Society's long term strategic plans. Together with Voyager Networks and ShoreTel, RASE is developing a customized CRM solution which will be integrated with the current system. RASE is also planning to deploy the ShoreTel solution at its on-site hotel, which is currently still using the old system.

"We're very pleased with the performance of the ShoreTel UC solution," Mr Page said. "It's proven to be a highly reliable, scalable and above all cost-efficient solution that has improved our customer service and employee efficiency. We're confident that ShoreTel's powerful combination of product excellence and highly responsive support through Voyager Networks will help us improve communications and member services."

About ShoreTel

ShoreTel is a provider of business communication solutions whose brilliantly simple unified communications platforms, applications and mobile UC solutions promise a new rhythm of workforce engagement and collaboration. With costly complexity eliminated by design from its award winning, all-in-one IP phone system, UC and contact center solution, and its industry leading hosted business phone system, workers enjoy a freedom and self-reliance that other providers can't match. Users have full control to engage and collaborate, no matter the time, place or device, for the lowest cost and demand on IT resources in the industry. ShoreTel is headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, and has regional offices and partners worldwide. For more information, visit shoretel.com or shoretelsky.com

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