



PUBLIC SERVICE ASSISTANCE NO LONGER 'ON HOLD' AT BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL THANKS TO NEXTIRAONE AND HBS



WORKING WITH NEXTIRAONE

*Chris Leake,
Implementation Manager, HBS*

"This new contact centre delivers on our commitment to make public service information easily accessible to the local community.

The NextiraOne solution has provided a cost effective contact centre that sits at the heart of our communications system enabling us to monitor and manage our activities more efficiently than ever before."

NextiraOne has installed an Alcatel Omnitouch Internet Protocol Contact Centre (IPCC) at Bedfordshire County Council to give better public access to council services. This is an important part of the council's local programme to meet the UK Government's 2005 targets of putting all services online for public access.

THE CLIENT

Bedfordshire County Council (BCC) serves a population of more than 360,000 citizens. The Council provides a number of the public services for the area including Highways, Trading Standards, Schools Transport, Bus Information and Student Loans.

BCC signed a twelve-year contract with HBS Group in June 2001 for key support services. This includes a 12 million Euros investment in IT systems to support all the public services they offer. NextiraOne is a technology partner of HBS.

THE CHALLENGE

The UK Government is committed to promoting continuous improvement in access to local government services through electronic service delivery and has set all councils the target of achieving 100 per cent online provision by 2005. BCC wanted its agenda to be not just about technology but also service transformation. **Improving its customers' access to its public services via all channels, not just electronic was key.**

With the telephone still the most popular choice for access to public services, it was critical that BCC was able to deal with telephone calls in a responsive and effective manner. The existing call centre consisted of 13 different answering points, each dealing with one specific service offered by the council. If the agent for that service was busy then there was no-one else available to deal with the call. BCC required a call centre that would prioritise calls and help change the widely held perception that local authorities are difficult to contact.

CUSTOMER REFERENCE



WORKING WITH BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Martin Ratcliffe, NextiraOne

"The key element in our successful relationship with BCC has been our ability to listen to their needs.

The delivery of efficient and valuable customer service was paramount, BCC did not want to prioritise technology above all else.

We introduced functionality as and when required, enabling sustained organic growth - allowing the service to grow from 2 to 11 services in less than a year."

THE SOLUTION

HBS contracted NextiraOne to install a Contact Centre (CC) solution that provides Bedfordshire residents with a more efficient and information rich service. The NextiraOne approach helps ensure their calls are dealt with by staff capable of answering specific questions and not simply passing callers from one department to another.

To this end, HBS and NextiraOne jointly designed and implemented an IPCC based on Alcatel OmniTouch technology. The agents working on the system have been trained to receive calls pertaining to several different services. The CC itself has been set up to route calls to the best available agent. For example if someone calls the number for Trading Standards and the primary agent is busy the call will be rerouted to an available agent that is skilled to cover that service.

The CC incorporates specialist Customer Relationship Management software from SAP that provides the agents with all the information required to handle the call – from caller details through to the array of council resources they can refer callers to.

The CC was up and running in August 2002, having been implemented in three months. It initially covered two of the council's key services. However, its success in providing an efficient and professional contact centre has seen the addition of 9 other service streams, with 40 IP agents in total.

Another major focus of BCC's public service is supply teachers for schools. Calls requesting supply teachers usually come in out of normal working hours. Previously to facilitate these calls, agents had to work unsociable hours, often in near empty council offices. Because the new Contact Centre utilises IP technology, agents are able to work remotely from their homes to provide a virtual CC for the supply teacher service. This enables the council to offer an efficient out of hours service that gives workers the option of flexible home working and allows the Council to release office space.