SAMSUNG

Samsung IP for pioneering Innovation Centre

"I love the fact that it's easy to use and totally flexible, and I can set everything up myself, which makes us very self-sufficient. The Samsung OfficeServ gives us the flexibility we need. It's working really well and I am extremely happy with the outcome."
Barbara Allsworth – Manager, Oxford University Begbroke Centre for Innovation and Enterprise

The Oxford University Begbroke Science Park offers a unique environment in which world-class scientists work alongside entrepreneurs, colleagues and decision-makers from industry, to translate cutting-edge research into commercial opportunities. As part of the park's development, a new 15,000 sq ft purpose-built Centre for Innovation and Enterprise was opened in the Summer of 2006, more than doubling the size of the previous centre. It offers flexible office and laboratory space with a full range of services which companies require for start-up.

Creating a flexible solution
The underlying theme of the facility is flexibility. Start-up businesses will grow and develop, often having different requirements further down the line which simply cannot be foreseen on day one. With this in mind, it was vital that every aspect of the Centre was as flexible as possible, including its communications technology. Centre Manager Barbara Allsworth explains further:

"Part of my role when I came on board in September 2005 was to ensure the Centre had all of the facilities that our occupiers would expect, and that it was set up in a way that would make it straightforward for us to administer. Of course, the communications system was a vital part of that, especially in a building where we have many separate companies operating."

Barbara met with the University to discuss the Centre's requirements, but the proposals which came back did not meet these requirements, as the day-to-day administration would have to be carried out by the University's telecoms department and not by Barbara herself. She continues:

"We operate in a commercial environment, whereas the University is an academic environment. Companies require changes to their programming at short notice which could not be achieved if another department was involved. Once I realised that the solution they were proposing could not do what I required, I recommended that we talk to the telecoms provider that I had used in my previous role."

During her six years at the Oxford Innovation Group, Barbara used a Samsung partner who provided a Samsung DCS which she loved. After reviewing the Centre's requirements and discussing their future plans in detail, this supplier recommended the Samsung OfficeServ 7400, which is an IP-based voice and data communications platform. The system, which was installed in the Spring of 2006 in time for the opening of the Centre in the July, has 144 analogue extensions and 32 digital extensions, with the option to add IP handsets and IP soft-phones in the future when these are required.

Oxford University Begbroke Centre for Innovation and Enterprise

The mix of analogue and digital handsets provides flexibility for everyone to have the right facilities for their individual needs. In addition, each room can be set up with DDI lines as required, enabling staff to take calls directly rather than having to go through the Centre's reception. Again flexibility is key here as some companies, particularly smaller ones, are often in a situation where no-one is in the office. So the ability to divert calls which normally come in on a DDI to the operator or to voicemail, at the press of a button, is a huge benefit.

A fixed cable link to Oxford University was also installed, which gives Barbara the ability to overflow calls to the main University reception during busy times. The OfficeServ has full voicemail capability for all users and also offers an extensive range of features which are ideal for a serviced office environment, as she explains:

"When a call comes in for a particular business it is essential that our operator can answer with the correct company name, so this needs to be presented on-screen before the call is taken. The other vital requirement is speed. When a new company moves in, adds extra staff or requires different call routing for example, we have to be able to accommodate this immediately, often with little or no prior warning. I needed to be able to make these changes myself, in order to meet the needs of commercial organisations.

We have a list of around 200 DDI numbers, so when a new person joins or requires a DDI, we just give them the list of available numbers to choose from. Everyone who needs one has their own DDI but can also choose whether to divert calls to a group, to an administrator or to voicemail. The system is also very flexible and simple to set up for handling out of hours calls."

Planning for the future

Barbara is not currently using the IP capability of the OfficeServ 7400, but this is something she plans to adopt in the future. Currently they have one 'virtual' tenant who will be moving in eventually, but is undergoing a lab fit-out before they do. For now, the Centre provides virtual office services for this company, including taking calls in their name and forwarding them as required. However, the IP capability of the OfficeServ would enable staff to use IP handsets or IP softphones on their laptops. This means they could make and receive calls on their main DDI number from anywhere in the world, without anyone realising that they were not in the office. Barbara concludes:

"Future use of VoIP is definitely something that we wanted to accommodate from day one. We are really pleased with the system, both with everything it can do now and everything it will be able to do for us in the future. Whatever our tenants need from a communications perspective, we know we can accommodate it. I love the fact that I can set everything up myself, which makes us very self-sufficient. I now have a flexible and cost-effective solution that is easy to use and gives me all the features I need. The Samsung OfficeServ is what I wanted and what I know our tenants need. It's working really well and I am extremely happy with the outcome."

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