

Phoenix IT Group

Streamlined communications unite employees nationwide

Following a number of acquisitions, IT services company Phoenix IT Group inherited numerous different communications networks – creating an infrastructure that was costly, time-consuming, difficult to manage and that lacked the scope to support the company’s strategic growth aims.

The company needed to streamline communications by consolidating its network infrastructure. However, resilience and reliability were vital to support business-critical data transfer.

An advanced solution incorporating our leading National Ethernet connections provided the answer. The Group now has a scalable network that will flex with future business needs, while delivering cutting-edge performance that employees and customers can rely on.

Reliable connectivity supports business-critical data transfer

With offices across the United Kingdom, Phoenix IT Group has experienced significant growth through acquisitions in recent years. Working with industry-leading partners as well as directly with end-user companies, it offers a wide range of IT services – including outsourcing, consultancy, disaster recovery and business continuity. Utilising ntl:Telewest Business’ National Ethernet connections, Phoenix IT is able to deliver cost-effective, flexible and reliable communications across the Group.

Streamlining communications

Before joining forces with Phoenix IT Group, the IT infrastructure of each acquired company had grown organically over time. So, for each part of the newly expanded business, IT staff were required to manage various different types of network, supplied and supported by numerous providers.

“We needed a single, high-performance network to link our main offices together,” explains Russell Stephens, Group Infrastructure Manager at Phoenix IT Group. “In this way, we would improve Group-wide connectivity and increase the efficiency with which we could manage our communications infrastructure.”

One of the acquired companies, ICM, already had an excellent working relationship with ntl:Telewest Business. This proven track record – together with our UK-wide reach and the forward-looking solution we offered – persuaded Group IT staff that our National Ethernet offering would fulfil their needs now and into the future. “What we really wanted was an end-to-end service from a single provider, rather than a product provided by one company and sold by another,” says Russell. “ntl:Telewest Business was quite a way ahead in the market and one of the few companies that could offer this.”



At a glance

Organisation

Phoenix IT Group



Industry sector

IT services

Location

Northampton

Challenge

Streamline organisation-wide communications with a single, consolidated network whilst supporting strategic company growth plans

Solution

A resilient and scalable network infrastructure with commercial flexibility

Products

National Ethernet

Benefits

- Improved inter-site communications and better access to Group-wide resources.
- Ability to respond more quickly and flexibly to customer requirements.
- Reduced maintenance requirements, resulting in significant cost-savings.

Meeting precise requirements

Our locally-based team worked closely with Phoenix IT Group to ensure that the solution provided met the organisation's precise requirements. A key area of collaboration was in formulating a bespoke Service Level Agreement (SLA). "Because it's critical that we can offer our customers the highest performance standards, we were keen to tailor the SLA to our specific needs," remarks Russell. "ntl:Telewest Business listened and worked with us to deliver exactly what we wanted."

Another important requirement was that Group IT staff should be able to manage the network themselves. "We didn't want a managed service as we have the technical expertise in-house to make any changes required," explains Russell. "Having control over the network allows us to respond immediately to customer requirements. And as flexibility and responsiveness are key differentiators for us as a company, this control is extremely important."

Smooth rollout

A phased implementation has joined-up 4 core sites with 300Mb connections, with planned links to a further 12 offices. And the Group can quickly and easily scale up capacity on each connection to 1Gb, as and when required. Russell believes that the strong support provided by our expert team was a key factor in what was a smooth rollout. "Our project manager is on the ball, keeps us well-informed and is very accessible," he confirms.

The new infrastructure has enabled Phoenix IT Group to embark on a project to consolidate all email and active directory systems into one national service. "This will provide a consistent user experience and allow staff to access services from any of our Group offices," says Russell. "In addition, the consolidation will reduce the number of servers required from 12 to 4 – cutting overheads and maintenance costs."

As well as carrying corporate data, the National Ethernet connections increasingly support customer traffic. "Now customers can use our network to access services that we host for them, such as applications or databases," comments Russell. "For example, a company can link to one of our data centres via the Group office that is closest to them, rather than establishing a long-distance connection to the data centre itself. This dramatically reduces costs for our customers and makes our services more competitive."

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What it has made possible

Improved organisation-wide communications have helped to unite employees across different business areas, easing the merger process. In addition, access to databases and applications stored at different offices enables staff to work more efficiently and provide better customer service.

Andy McEwan, Senior Manager, Ethernet Product Management, ntl:Telewest Business comments: "The relationship that ntl:Telewest Business has developed with Phoenix demonstrates our 'next generation mindset'. It's about bringing all elements of the service together into a logical package that meets the customer's requirements exactly and flexibly. It goes beyond providing a good technical solution, and includes a seamless interlock of commercials, technology, customer understanding and outstanding customer service – to deliver a great customer solution."

Supported by our Next Generation Network, IP-based applications are also helping to drive efficiency across the organisation. Videoconferencing is helping to reduce the need for travel between offices, while IP Telephony is already leading to significant cost savings at the Group's Northampton site.

"Our network is going to be a key enabler for a number of different technologies in future," concludes Russell. "I am confident that the ntl:Telewest Business team will provide the support we need as we continue to grow."

Telecoms 2.0

Next Generation Networks have enormous potential to transform business. We should know: we have the UK's only national Next Generation Network; one that powers mission-critical services for some of the UK's most demanding customers. But Next Generation Networks need to be matched with a new kind of telco mindset, one that's also next generation and is defined by an open, collaborative, can-do culture. These twin strands of technological capability and service-centric mindset form the DNA of a new kind of business telco. Say hello to Telecoms 2.0.

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