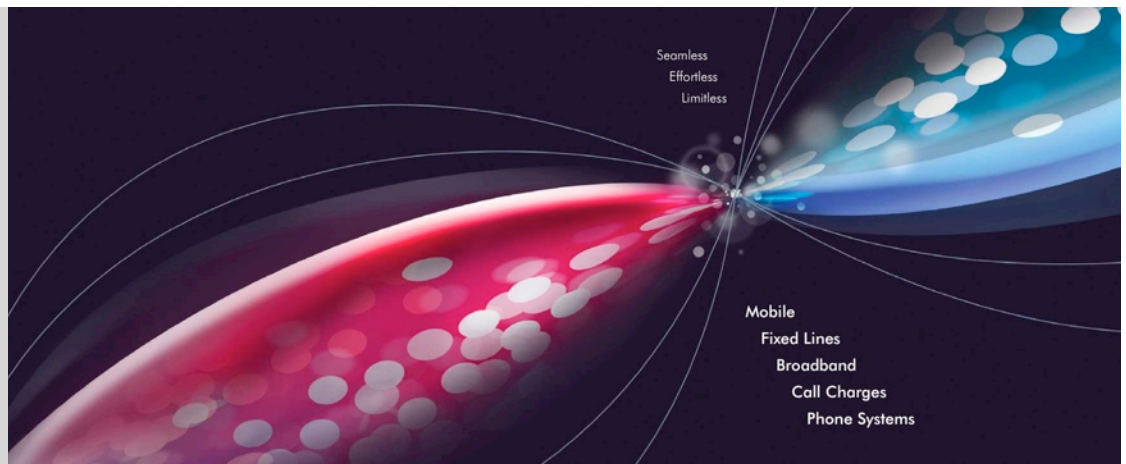


# CASESTUDY

Portway Domestic  
Appliances Limited



## Southern Communications help Portway Domestic to reduce costs and maximise efficiency.

Portway Domestic use **Southern Communications** for all of its calls and lines together with the NEC Aspire system to bring greater efficiency through reduced costs and better integration of it's office and field-based teams.



**Portway Domestic Appliances Limited has been serving the independent electrical trade for nearly 20 years. A wholesale supplier of top quality domestic appliances from over 20 major brands, Portway are based in modern offices and warehouse facilities in Andover with nearly 70,000sqft of storage area. Portway's aim is to offer its customers an unparalleled level of service backed with the most competitive pricing available in today's marketplace.**

Portway have been a Southern Communications customer for over 10 years beginning with the installation of their first phone system in 1998. Today, Portway use an NEC Aspire system

supplied by Southern Communications in addition to a mobile handset account and calls and lines. We spoke to Commercial Director John Bainbridge about their reasons for choosing Southern Communications.

### Background

As a sales-driven business in a very competitive market, it is vital that Portway have in place systems that allow their trade customers to contact them quickly and easily at all times. Failure to do so would result in them being unable to provide the customer service required with the subsequent loss of business to their competitors. It is also vital that the field-based sales staff are fully integrated with the office based team in Andover to ensure an efficient operation.

### The issues

In the late nineties, Portway were experiencing several issues which

led it to rethink its telecoms provider. Firstly, as the business grew the costs of its calls and lines began to increase dramatically. The provider at the time was not proactive in identifying cost cutting solutions tailored to the needs of the business, resulting in Portway paying too much for its existing telecoms system. The incumbent was also hard to deal with - being both slow to identify and fix technical issues with the existing systems. This led to frequent down-times in the telecoms infrastructure and Portway customers being unable to contact the sales team. As the company became larger it was clear that the existing infrastructure was unable to cope with both the number and demands of it's users.

### The answer

The first priority was to control and minimise costs by switching the company's calls and lines to a



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**Image:** Torbay Council and Sovereign Housing Group plans to build a multimillion pound flagship affordable housing development in Torquay.



**“the robustness, flexibility and expandability of the NEC Aspire system has really paid dividends”**

**John Bainbridge, Operations Director, Portway Domestic Appliances Limited**

cost-effective alternative. Southern Communications were quickly identified as the preferred supplier due to its ability to provide “a more personal service whilst providing cost savings on both our line rentals and calls” says John Bainbridge, Operations Director at Portway. The next step was to look at the phone systems themselves and how the reliability could be improved to create a new infrastructure that could adapt to the ever-changing needs of the business. John comments “Southern Communications were extremely helpful - they quickly assessed our needs and identified a system that was best-suited to our requirements.” The original system was upgraded in 2004 to an NEC Aspire as Portway continued to demand more and more from its telecoms infrastructure. Not only did this promise to be a more robust but also allowed Portway to better

integrate their field-based teams with the head office in Andover by allowing remote staff to access office features such as voicemail. Since installation the NEC system has delivered “fantastic reliability” enabling Portway to offer its customers a much greater level of customer service through fast turnaround of enquiries and orders. In addition, the new system has grown with the business, adding more users whilst converging the company’s voice and data networks in order to reduce charges.

#### **The benefits**

Portway say that the benefits to the business have been huge since switching to Southern Communications. “We’ve reduced our calls and lines costs by an average of 30%” says John, “and the robustness, flexibility and expandability of the NEC Aspire system has really paid dividends”

he claims. With down-time now virtually “non-existent” the management team are able to concentrate on the business and delivering customers with an unparalleled customer service. The benefits also extend to staff who, despite being based out in the field, are able to operate as a single unit and feel part of the head office team.

In fact, Portway has been so impressed with the service provided that they have since moved the company’s mobile account to Southern Communications in addition to installing an array of system handsets, headsets and call loggers. John concludes “they really understand the needs of our business and simply take care of everything for us - leaving us to focus on our customers.”



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