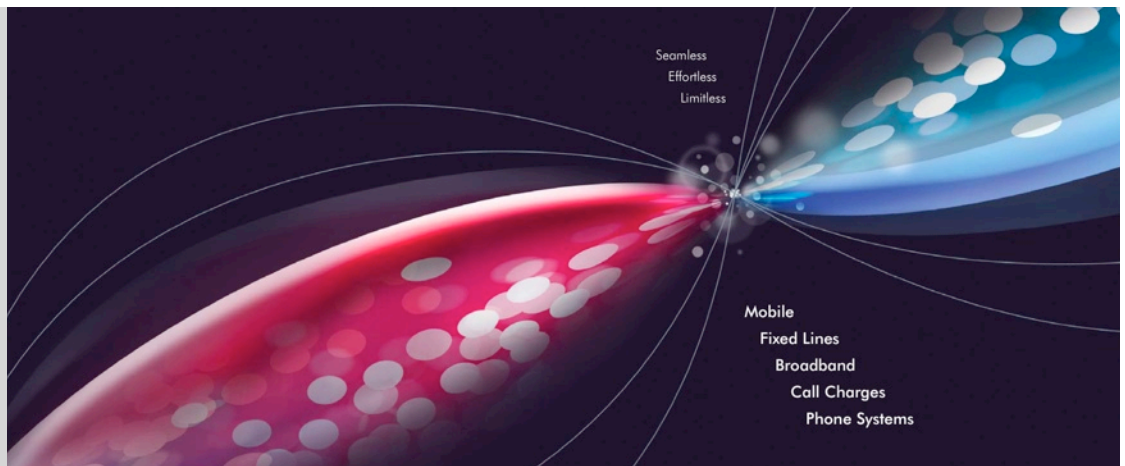


CASESTUDY

Russ Berrie



Southern Communications help Russ Berrie achieve best value

Russ Berrie chose an NEC Aspire telecoms system in 2007. Installed and maintained by Southern Communications, the system has helped to reduce costs and deliver better efficiencies.



Russ Berrie designs, manufactures and distributes teddy bears and other stuffed animals, gifts, and toys around the world. A global business, Russ Berrie has been established for over 40 years and is committed to bringing customers innovative designs developed to meet demanding standards and has established an excellent reputation for producing high quality products.

Issues

In recent years, Russ Berrie has seen increased competition from the mass market retailers and producers who have increasingly started to produce similar products for less money. As a result, the company has greatly reduced the number of products it manufactures (SKU's) but increased the throughput so is actually producing larger numbers of fewer products. The net result has been a greater requirement to streamline the business in order to maximise efficiencies in all areas in order to deliver better profitability and allow the business to compete in the toy and gift market. Driven by this need to reduce costs, when the business decided to move premises in 2007, it was standard practice to review its service contracts - including the telecoms

infrastructure to ensure it was achieving best value.

The answer

Russ Berrie's Business Analyst, Jonathan Kemp explains the objectives that the company set itself when sourcing a new solution for its telecoms infrastructure. "We wanted a system that would provide stronger reporting of calls in order to better manage our costs as well as providing access to VoIP technology in order to further reduce call charges. We also saw the cost benefit to the business of installing an efficient system that would deliver additional benefits such as using telecoms infrastructure to supply PC ethernet connections, thus reducing the need for a high number of data floor points." After receiving quotes from numerous

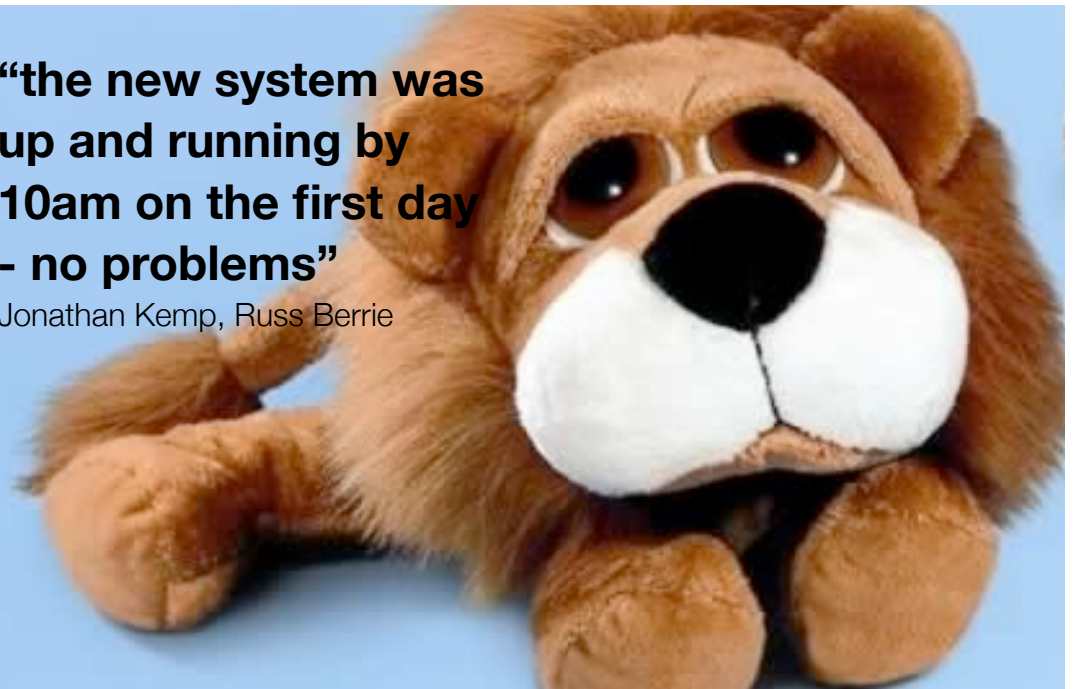


CASESTUDY

“the new system was up and running by 10am on the first day - no problems”

Jonathan Kemp, Russ Berrie

Image: Russ Berrie manufacture and distribute gifts and toys



suppliers, the cost and support package proposed by Southern Communications really shone through and Russ Berrie settled on the NEC Aspire system as the best fit for their requirements. The company also made the decision to move its calls and lines to Southern Communications in order to further reduce its telecoms costs.

Having made the decision to go with Southern Communications Jonathan says the customer service was superb. “They were onsite the very first day to sort everything out and the new NEC system was up and running by 10am - no problems”. This initial installation was further supported by onsite training once the rest of the office move was completed

which Jonathan says was “very useful”.

The benefits

Since moving to Southern Communications and the NEC Aspire system, Jonathan says Russ Berrie has been extremely happy with the new system. “Administration is very easy - we can simply use the IP addresses to directly log into the PBX system, saving valuable time and money”. Jonathan is also delighted with the estimated 10-15% cost savings the company has made by switching its calls and lines to Southern Communications. The whole company has also been delighted with the NEC hardware, “the phones themselves are modern and really easy to use” says

Jonathan, “the NEC Aspire just works for us.”

Since installation in 2007, Russ Berrie has continued to enjoy the flexibility and efficiencies delivered by a modern telecoms system. Jonathan concludes “the cost savings have allowed us to realise a much faster return on investment” helping the company to maintain its focus on achieving best value across all areas of the business.



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