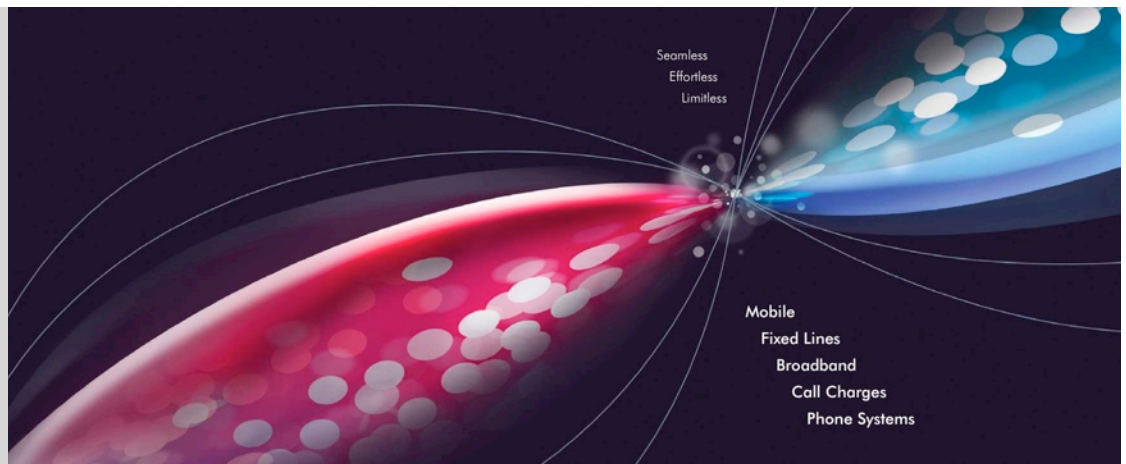


CASESTUDY

Bendicks Chocolate



Southern Communications help Bendicks deliver better integration and greater operating efficiency.

Bendicks Chocolate use **Southern Communications** and the **Avaya System** to better integrate its UK and US operations and reduce operating costs.



Established in 1930 in Kensington, London, Bendicks began life manufacturing and selling the now-famous 'Bittermints' to the wealthy clientele of the city. Today, the company manufactures and distributes a range of premier confectionary from classic after-dinner mints to contemporary chocolates such as 'Mingles'. The company's head office is based in Winchester where all manufacturing, sales and distribution take place.

Background

A consumer-driven business, the company has witnessed a huge shift in the demands of its customers. Traditionally a producer of after-dinner mints for

special occasions, the company has recently extended its range and introduced new products to meet the more relaxed and casual lifestyle of today's customers.

The issues

In recent years, Bendicks have seen the pace of change increase dramatically. As a result the company has had to quickly adapt and evolve in order to keep up with changing customer needs as well as the demands of the UK's supermarket multiples (who represent the company's main retail outlets). In terms of the telecoms infrastructure, there were several issues that were hindering Bendick's ability to move with the market. Kieron Brogan, head of I.T. explains the three key issues which had to be addressed. "Firstly, our previous system was over 15 years old so we recognised the need to modernise to a system that would

last and be future-proof" he says. "Secondly, we felt that VoIP technology had matured to a point where it was able to offer us facilities that would allow us to be more proactive as a business. Finally, with an increasing number of our employees working remotely we wanted a telecoms infrastructure that would allow us to better integrate our workforce." In essence, Kieron says he wanted to "find a supplier we could work with as a partner."

The answer

Having made the decision to upgrade the telecoms infrastructure, Kieron says there were several factors that put Southern Communications ahead of the competition. Firstly, says Kieron, was the "open and honest approach which gave me the confidence they would provide a system that was best fit for our business and not theirs!" Kieron



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“Southern Communications were excellent and made the whole process really simple”

Kieron Brogan, Bendicks Chocolate

Image: Bendicks' premier chocolate

says the costs were also very competitive. However, most important was the fact that Southern Communications “took the time to properly spec the system” and provide a proposal that wasn’t “unnecessarily complex” like their competitors.

The system proposed was the Avaya which Kieron says was the same as that being used by the sister company in the US. This would allow them to bridge the geographic gap between the two companies and allow them to seamlessly exchange calls. The Avaya system was also extremely future-proof so was more likely to adapt and change with the needs of the business over time. “It’s a good, straightforward and flexible system” says Kieron.

Once the decision had been made to move to Southern Communications and the Avaya system, Kieron says the rest of the process was extremely easy. “Southern Communications were excellent and made the whole process really simple - even down to liaising with BT to move the lines. If we’d had to deal with this ourselves it would have been extremely difficult - especially with the layers of account manager and other contacts.”

The benefits

Since the move, Bendicks have started to enjoy some important benefits that have allowed them to improve the operating efficiencies whilst also reducing costs. Kieron comments, “the Avaya system has given us the platform to grow the telecoms infrastructure for the

future and we’re able to better integrate both our US office and our homeworkers through voicemail, etc”. Costs have also been significantly reduced since switching to Southern Communications and the maintenance fees have been decreased as well.

The result is a telecoms infrastructure that is well suited to the future needs of the organisation, satisfies the need to better integrate the business and it’s employees and is delivering better value-for-money and greater efficiency to the business as a whole.



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