



Scottish Borders Council

Helping Scottish Borders Council Answer the Public's Questions

AN ENGHOUSE INTERACTIVE CASE STUDY

Overview

INDUSTRY

Local Government

GOALS

Driving operational efficiencies and in delivering higher-quality services while spending less

SOLUTIONS

Enghouse Interactive
Communications Center integrated
with Microsoft Lync

BENEFITS

- Delivers improved customer service while simultaneously reducing costs
- Flexibility to adapt the solution to meet changing requirements, providing considerable savings in admin time/costs
- Fast, smooth implementation that meant very little disruption to the business
- Lync federation with the PS team at Enghouse meant they received fantastic support throughout the deployment

Delivering More with Lync

Like most public sector organisations, the Scottish Borders Council is focused on driving operational efficiencies and in delivering higher-quality services while spending less. It's an operational imperative that has recently been brought into sharper focus by the increased workload that Government driven reform of the social service, benefits and welfare systems is bringing.

This made it imperative that the IT systems the council deployed were effective in keeping costs down and were also able to support the council's need to respond quickly and effectively to resolve concerns the public have with the changes. In addition, the solution will help address questions people have concerning the council's complete portfolio of services - from council tax and housing benefit to planning applications and rubbish collection.

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Stephen Roy, Project Manager,
SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

"Many communications systems claim to integrate with Lync. When you start to investigate, however, you realise that there are degrees of integration and the Enghouse system was one of the few that was truly integrated. It was the smoothest implementation we have ever seen!"

Barbara Wilson, Project Manager,
EXCHANGE COMMUNICATIONS

Making the Move

To ensure it was delivering the best possible service, the council needed to upgrade its existing customer service platform for a more flexible, adaptable solution. After reviewing several options, the council elected to deploy Enghouse Interactive Communications Center (EICC), in a Microsoft Lync environment, a modular, feature-rich solution for contact centre communications, enabling users to add functionality as requirements and budget allow.

According to Stephen Roy, project manager, Scottish Borders Council: "We chose Communications Center and Lync based on two key factors: cost and flexibility. We were able to reduce data and telephony network requirements and implement a single unified communications network across our offices significantly reducing costs."

"It was also key for us to be able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. We were frustrated that our old systems architecture could not be easily customised," adds Roy. "The combined Enghouse Interactive and Lync solution means that we can now route calls to whatever endpoint we want. And we can be creative in the way we structure the organisation, safe in the knowledge that our technology will be acting as an enabler of choice rather than a barrier to it."

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The Right Solution

The Scottish Borders Council originally put out a tender and this was won by telecoms solutions reseller Exchange Communications who had chosen to partner with Enghouse Interactive. The council already had Lync in place and Exchange knew that EICC was capable of running on the Lync platform.

Exchange Communications project manager, Barbara Wilson, said: "We proposed the EICC solution because we knew it would be the ideal choice for the Borders Council. It gives them all the functionality they require with the opportunity to add more as and when they need it. Coupled with this, we knew Enghouse Interactive would give us outstanding support in delivering the high-quality service the Borders Council was looking for."

As Roy explains: "Many communications systems claim to integrate with Lync. When you start to investigate, however, you realise that there are degrees of integration and the Enghouse system was one of the few that was truly integrated. It was the smoothest implementation we have ever seen!

"We were also impressed with the 'presence' information about the availability of internal staff that it was able to give us," continued Roy. "It was also extremely cost-effective and a really good fit for our size of organisation."

With the decision taken to implement the EICC, Scottish Borders Council began the implementation process with the help of Exchange Communications. A key challenge was to ensure that the call flows that were in place on the legacy solution were effectively captured and transferred over to the new one. Once this was completed, the installation took place and was rapidly concluded. 29 Scottish Border Council agents across three sites, Hawick, Galashiels and Newtown St Boswells, are now live on the system, handling calls from the public.

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Exchange Communications also played a key role in the period immediately after the implementation, running interactive workshops for the Borders Council contact centre agents and responding rapidly to any issues. The approach taken by Exchange has been to provide support when needed but through the transfer of knowledge and expertise, to help the council to become as self-sufficient as possible in the way it engages with the system.

That said, the council has had the reassurance of knowing that it could at any time tap into Enghouse Interactive's contact centre solutions expertise.

According to Roy, "we were extremely impressed with the technical knowledge and services that Enghouse Interactive was able to provide us with. We were federated with them on Lync, which was great because it meant we could instant message the project and professional services teams at any time. And we knew we would get a great response from Enghouse if we ever had any issues."

A Raft of Benefits

The EICC system is currently handling calls both to the council's contact centre and also to its main switchboard. Every week, it manages approximately 2,200 calls from the public to the contact centre and a further 1,800 calls to the switchboard, some of which are from council staff, partners and suppliers. Currently, the system is being used for voice only but the Council will look in the future at extending this in order to deliver a broader multimedia service. Similarly, although it does not yet use the EICC's call-back functionality, it does not rule out moving to this further down the line.

Call recording is being tested at the moment. The EICC solution is PCI compliant, and there are plans to integrate with the council's CRM system. Work is currently in progress to enable it to stop and resume recording as required (while agents take credit card details, for example). Scottish Borders Council has also deployed skills-based routing which it uses in conjunction with the presence capability of Lync to help ensure that calls are managed by the customer service representative best placed to deal with them.

The council is planning to use the system to support remote working. Soon staff will be able to connect with the EICC system even when they are away from the office. It is also looking at home working, getting operators to use the solution across the broadband connection in their own homes. This could potentially be a major benefit if seasonal weather this winter stops staff getting into to work.

According to Dave Smith Channel Director, Enghouse Interactive: "In local government, contact centres have to meet the difficult challenge of delivering better customer service while simultaneously cutting costs. The EICC is enabling the Scottish Borders Council to manage its budget more efficiently while at the same time allowing it to plan its future approach to dealing with the public."

Thanks to the EICC solution running on Lync and the high-quality support provided by Exchange Communications, Scottish Borders Council is far more confident about the way it is interacting with the public. The successful implementation of the EICC has enabled the council to optimise its investment in Lync.

According to Roy, "Today, we can be much more flexible in terms of routing calls, bringing in additional resource as and when required and dealing with peaks in calls. With the new system, we also feel that we have a much stronger core platform in place, which in turn means we can bring in new functionality as and when we need it and we are therefore much better prepared to face whatever the future may bring."

About Enghouse Interactive

Enghouse Interactive develops and supplies the widest range of customer contact solutions on the market through an extensive network of value-added partners. Enghouse Interactive's integrated suite of solutions includes multi-channel contact center, self-service, attendant operator consoles and workforce optimisation. These solutions enable organisations to classify and respond to customers in the way that they want: quickly, efficiently and successfully, with minimal effort.