




Compete 366

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Case Study

Compete366 works with CDS to implement Microsoft Business Voice

www.cds.coop

CDS is a charitable community benefit society first established in 1975, whose purpose is to provide, support and promote co-op and community-led housing This case study explains how Compete366 helped CDS to implement Microsoft Business Voice—saving over 60% compared to other telephony solutions.

CDS is a charitable community benefit society first established in 1975, whose purpose is to provide, support and promote co-op and community-led housing – so that more people can shape the things that matter to them in their home, neighbourhood or community.

As a registered housing association CDS provides 740 affordable rented homes and 300 leasehold properties in London and the home counties. CDS is also the largest co-op service agency in the South-East offering landlord and business services to around 35 independent housing co-ops and their 1,800 homes. Through this work, CDS aims to enable co-ops to thrive as an independent and successful business.



The Business Challenge

As the Covid pandemic struck the UK, it was imperative that the CDS team moved out of their offices, and all staff started work immediately from home armed with a mobile phone and laptop. AS the team had been working from a serviced office, the desk phones were diverted to team members mobile phones, and the team was up and running within 24 hours, using the functionality of MS Teams to run meetings.

As Linda Wallace, Chief Executive explains, *“I was so proud of our team who worked hard to provide this continuity of service for our residents and clients at a really challenging time.”*

However, the diverted phones were problematic, the team faced issues with poor call quality, negative feedback from customers who were getting lost in the phone system as calls were diverted and re-routed, or they couldn't hear or be heard. In addition, some of the staff suffered from poor mobile signals in their homes and needed boosters to improve call quality.

It was decided that a better telephony system was needed to improve things, and fast.

The Solution

Fortunately, as existing customers of Compete366, a quick call revealed that there was a ready-made solution in Microsoft365 Business Voice. M365 Business Voice is a powerful and flexible telephone system for small and medium organisations that replaces traditional telephony providers and in-house phone systems that can be difficult and costly to manage.

A demonstration of Business Voice was delivered by one of the Compete366 experts, which helped to identify the CDS requirements up front.

CDS had a list of requirements for the new telephony solution which included:

- Improved call quality and control
- The ability to give messages to people waiting on calls
- Visibility of where callers are in system / queue.
- Voicemail
- Call transfer or conferencing

As an existing M365 user, CDS already had the base licenses they needed, and just needed an M365 Business Voice add-on for each user to implement the system.

The Outcome

Linda explains *“The new system was a dream. Everything became very easy for us to manage, and because the phone system is a part of Microsoft Teams, this means we could use any of our PCs or mobile devices as a phone using our Business Voice phone number. The ability for everyone to have their phone wherever they were was transformational for us.*

Our new Business Voice system uses the internet and provides great call quality. This means that our team can work when travelling or at home, even if the mobile phone signal is poor. It provides us with complete flexibility and just works – very easily. With support from our partner, Compete366, the roll out went extremely well, and the only change we needed to make was a minor piece of work to reroute our main office number.”

Once the new Business Voice system was up and running, CDS was able to retire its legacy telephony system, and provide one central number for ongoing use. And Microsoft Business Voice allows CDS to change voicemails or reroute calls, for example due to staff illness, and this change can be made by a CDS team member without requiring any IT skills.

One team member felt so confident using Business Voice that she created an internal “How To” guide on the first day of using it – sharing with team members her advice for transferring calls, changing voicemail messages and more.

The Benefits

The main benefits that CDS has already seen from their use of Business Voice are as follows:

- Business Voice has improved customer experience and is easier and more reliable for staff
- It makes it easy to plan for the permanent shift to more remote and flexible, hybrid working for the CDS team.

Value for money

- As CDS was already licenced to use M365 the additional cost of Business Voice was over 60% cheaper than other telephony options considered.

Future proofing

- Business Voice is a Microsoft product which means that it is constantly evolving and kept up to date.

Next Steps

As a forward-looking organisation, CDS is now looking to the next steps for this project. This includes area such as using Power BI for reporting on the Business Voice usage to be able visualise how individuals are dealing with calls – how they are routed, speed of pick up etc.

And another area for consideration is the ability to record calls to for compliance and service quality.

“We have always felt that working with Compete366 is easy – we don’t have a lot of inhouse expertise – but we are ambitious with what we want to achieve.

Compete365 had already supported us with our M365 project and we knew they were very reliable. This project has felt effortless – there was no staff training needed and we are very happy with the Business Voice product and the support and documentation provided by Compete366.”

Linda Wallace, Chief Executive , CDS Co-Operatives

To find out more about implementing
Microsoft Business Voice please call
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