

CASE STUDY

SHENTON GROUP

swcomms migrated the Shenton Group to Microsoft 365 and Enterprise Microsoft Teams Direct Routing to support their home workers just as the COVID-19 lockdown began in March 2020.

Shenton Group, based in Andover, Hampshire, supplies, installs and maintains all aspects of standby power, uninterruptible power supplies and combined heat and power systems.

swcomms had been in regular contact with Shenton Group as the business was planning to upgrade their telephone system to replace an old NEC model. They also asked if we could help them move to Microsoft 365, formerly known as Office 365.

At the same time, the extent of the COVID-19 pandemic was becoming apparent, as was the need for effective homeworking solutions to enable staff to socially distance themselves in line with the government advice.

Our communications consultant suggested they use the Phone System application that is part of the Microsoft Teams unified communications suite to leverage their investment in their Microsoft 365 licences.

Despite not being able to visit Shenton Group's offices, our team was still able to effectively demonstrate the solution and all its features, including:

Calling

Teams can be used as a professional, cloud-hosted telephone system with numbers and lines migrated to our trusted SIP partner, Gamma, to replace traditional ISDN services. Shenton Group chose to use headsets, mobiles and laptops as softphones for their home workers during lockdown. They can use speed dialling, hold and transfer calls, view call history and access voicemail.



Free calls

With 5,000 free minutes to UK landlines and 2,000 free minutes to UK mobiles per SIP channel, call costs are drastically reduced.

Presence

This powerful tool allows users to select the best way to contact colleagues or customers. A traffic light system signifies whether users are: 'Available' 'Be right back', 'Appear away', 'Do not disturb' or 'Busy'. These can be manually selected or are automatically generated in line with appointments in Outlook calendars or if the user is on a call.

If available, users may choose to call or send an instant message. If busy or away from their computer, users may still send an instant message in case the recipient is able to multi-task, or they can choose to send an email instead.

Instant messaging

Like the messaging apps we use in our life away from work, these can be used effectively to ask quick questions without clogging up email inboxes. Instant messaging is also ideal for messages to groups of people.

Video and audio calling

Calls between colleagues and other Microsoft Teams users can be initiated with one click of a mouse for one-to-one or group meetings. These have proved priceless during lockdown as teams, colleagues, etc. have been able to have face-to-face meetings despite being geographically dispersed.



Screen sharing

When users need to show someone what they are working on to explain their thought process or to prompt a quick decision, they can share their screens during a call or instant message conversation.

All these features create a collaborative environment that home workers can thrive in without feeling disconnected from their colleagues. However, it also works equally well as an office solution.

When Shenton return to their office after lockdown, they will look at using traditional handsets on desks while still having the softphone option available to them.

These handsets will be the only hardware they need. Microsoft Teams' Phone System is cloud-hosted so there is no physical system to purchase or maintain.

It is paid for on a monthly basis, just like Microsoft 365, and is continually updated at cloud level to maintain security and to introduce new features as they become available.

Microsoft 365 gave Shenton Group users access to all the Office tools they were used to accessing, such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc. plus 1TB of data storage and Exchange Outlook email.

The benefits of these cloud-based services are clear and Shenton Group needed both the Microsoft 365 and Teams elements as quickly as possible during lockdown.

Our Microsoft experts migrated all email data, set up 94 email accounts and 75 Teams Phone System users within five working days. This meant staff could immediately begin making outgoing calls. BT ported the numbers, including direct dial-ins, a few days later so Shenton Group could take incoming calls via Teams too.

Shenton Group benefit from remote managed support from our engineering team for all ongoing moves, adds and changes for Microsoft Teams and 365, so their IT manager can pass on responsibility for this to our experts.

“Working with **swcomms**, we were able to implement Microsoft 365 at breakneck speed. All requirements were clearly understood and implemented. The installation was painless.

“As a company, we transitioned to Teams as a communications platform very smoothly with very little user confusion.

“Video calling is the new normal for us; remote users still feel part of the team.

“A big thank you from us to **swcomms**; you did a stellar job.”

John Duffy, IT Manager