

Arts Victoria finds a masterpiece in NEC

Arts Victoria



Customer

- Arts Victoria

Industry

- The Arts

Challenges

- Analogue system
- Multiple handset types
- Lack of scalability and flexibility
- High maintenance costs

Solution

- NEC's SV8100 supports both traditional and IP environments
- Fully scalable and flexible VoIP solution
- Centralised management of phones, data systems and platforms
- Mobile solution for improved contactability

Results

- 50% reduction in monthly phone bills
- Latest technology
- Simple and effective processes allow for movement of staff and growth
- Consistent phone numbers

Applications

- SV8100
- Q-Master

Overview

From the National Ballet to its unique indigenous art programs, there are plenty of reasons why Victoria is touted as Australia's arts capital.

State Government body Arts Victoria plays a vital role in earning the State this title, by making the arts available and accessible to all Victorians and supporting Victoria's local artists and creative industries.

Responsible for implementing the government's arts policy, Arts Victoria coordinates and manages a wide range of temporary and long-term arts projects.

"We are responsible for managing arts funding for individual artists through to arts companies like the Australian Ballet and the Australian Opera," said Nicci Dillon, Project Manager, Arts Victoria.

"So we take a massive volume of calls from those operating in the Arts community as well as the public. We get phone enquiries about how to get a new display cabinet for the local historical society through to how to get tickets to ballet."

Arts Victoria's projects, staff roles and overarching focus are subject to the vagaries of government election promises and policies, and therefore subject to frequent change.

As such, Arts Victoria requires a phone system that is highly reliable and flexible, and able to accommodate new phone lines quickly and cost effectively as new projects and staff are introduced.

NEC delivers flexible and scalable solutions to improve your efficiency

The Issue

Arts Victoria had used Telstra's Spectrum PABX phone system since 1997 which provided the organisation a bank of 99 phone lines. It also used 12 different types of Telstra analogue phones.

The majority of the numbers could not be recycled because they had been attributed to specific people and projects.

"We tried to reassign numbers, but it resulted in our staff being bombarded with phone calls that were completely irrelevant to their roles and responsibilities," said Dillon.

"The phone system had also become costly. We were paying rental on all 99 lines and paying a similar rate to residential line rental. We were racking up bills of \$7,500 to \$8,000 a month.

"We were on a non-government telecommunications plan. Calls within government departments were treated as local calls – there was no whole-of-government connectivity."

In addition, the phone system would not allow Arts Victoria to bring on new numbers.

Arts Victoria had appointed 20 additional staff and increased its headcount to 85 full-time staff. So once its 10 year contract with Telstra ended, Arts Victoria began reviewing new phone systems.

The Solution

Arts Victoria required a solution that was highly flexible and scalable, and could support both traditional circuit-switched and pure IP telephony environments. NEC's SV8100 Communication Server was a perfect fit.

"VoIP was the next logical step. We did not have the space for a PABX in the building and VoIP is certainly the way forward for us. So after consultation with the Government Services Group, we decided to deploy NEC's SV8100 solution," said Dillon.

Designed specifically for small to medium sized businesses, the NEC SV8100 offers centralised management of phones, data systems and platforms.

In January 2009, Arts Victoria deployed the SV8100 with 86 live phone numbers and 85 NEC IP handsets.

As part of the solution, Arts Victoria partnered with NEC under the Victorian Government's Telecommunications Purchasing & Management Strategy (TPAMS) agreement to give Arts Victoria access to The Victoria Office Telephony Service (VOTS) initiative which provides Victorian Government Departments with access to the overarching government purchase agreement providing economies of scale for pricing not ordinarily available. NEC has already successfully deployed over 40,000 services across more than 200 buildings under the Victorian Government's VOTS initiative.

"By purchasing from NEC under the Victorian Government's VOTS agreement, Arts Victoria was able to leverage already negotiated pricing," said NEC's Assistant General Manager for Public Sector Solutions Geoff Bentley. "This offered Arts Victoria total transparency and pricing they would not have been able to negotiate themselves."

NEC delivers a flexible solution to support changing requirements

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Robust and completely scalable, the SV8100 supports up to 200 numbers, giving Arts Victoria the flexibility to grow and move.

“We can now move, add or change phones quickly and easily. Our staff can simply plug any phone into any jack wherever it's needed and it's ready to go.

“The upgrade gave me a chance to do a good clean up and assign sets of numbers to units. We now have a consistency of numbers which is great,” said Dillon.

“Our new NEC phones are like mobile phones thanks to the SV8100's mobility features. Our customers can still access our staff even when they are away from their desks.”

Using the SV8100 system, Arts Victoria has also managed to reduce its monthly phone bill by more than 50 per cent. Its phone bills have dropped by \$4,000 a month.

Centralised management improves customer service and efficiency

NEC's Q-Master customer contact solution has also enabled Arts Victoria to improve its customer service levels, simplify administration and increase productivity.

“We can now manage phone, email and web requests from our reception PC. When we receive a call at reception, we can direct the call to the appropriate staff member with a few clicks of the mouse.

“This saves staff a lot of time as they are no longer handling irrelevant calls and are able to handle relevant calls quickly and easily – no call backs required,” said Dillon.

“It also means callers are connected to the person best able to help them, quickly and efficiently, reducing caller wait times and improving service levels.

“The console enables staff to see whether or not a staff member can take a call. All incoming calls are displayed on screen so if a staff member is busy, other staff can note the caller's number and take an accurate message.”

According to Dillon, Arts Victoria was very impressed with the levels of service NEC provided both during and after implementation.

“The service and support we have received from NEC has been excellent. The rollout was seamless and they are quick to respond to our queries. The NEC team trained all our staff onsite so we experienced few teething problems,” said Dillon.

“NEC also helped us overcome some tricky obstacles, such as working with our IT service providers to ensure VoIP usage didn't undermine our network integrity.”

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