

Aviation company improves customer service and cuts IT maintenance costs with NEC and Voicepoint

Hawker Pacific



Customer

- Hawker Pacific

Industry

- Aviation

Challenges

- Outdated communications equipment resulting in inefficient processes
- High equipment maintenance costs
- Reliance on fax-based orders
- Costs of mobility

Solution

- An IP based communications infrastructure utilising some existing equipment and hardware, as well as new equipment and applications

Results

- Maintenance savings of \$1,000 a month
- Facsimile costs reduced by \$2,000 a month
- 60% reduction in individual mobile costs
- Greatly increased efficiency and processes

Hardware/Applications

- IPS2000 IP Communications Server
- Q-Master Contact Centre
- Unified Communications for Business

Overview

Hawker Pacific is a global business that sells and services private and commercial aircraft across the globe.

It has 20 sites across Australia and Asia and is heavily reliant on the telephone and fax to process orders and service its large customer base. The company's phone and fax system was crucial to business success, but was becoming subject to escalating maintenance costs and led to inefficient and processes for handling orders.

With disparate systems, multiple order methods and escalating maintenance costs, Hawker Pacific engaged Voicepoint Communications and NEC to overhaul its communications infrastructure. It now operates an IP based system providing significant cost savings, increased operational efficiencies and a platform for unified communications.

Scalability, flexibility, mobility and efficiency in one complete solution.

The Issue

The biggest issue for Hawker Pacific was the cost of maintaining an outmoded communications system. It used dated equipment with a mix of traditional TDM and IP PABXs that were poorly allocated across the various sites in Australia. This resulted in significant maintenance and line leasing costs.

The company has an unusually high reliance on fax as a communications medium. Its customers range from the major private airline contractors to small, rural, servicing centres that often lack email or internet connectivity. These independent centres rely heavily on fax and expect their suppliers to be able to process them.

On average Hawker Pacific receives five times as many orders via fax than email with approximately 100 fax orders processed each day. For Hawker Pacific, this made for time intensive and manual order processing with 20 fax machines providing orders into the call centre. Tracking these orders, ensuring they got processed and recorded became a bit hit-and-miss and would take on average 5-10 minutes per order.

The other big issue for Hawker Pacific was mobility. The management and sales team travel extensively across Australia and Asia creating high call costs and made contacting them difficult.

As Jeremy Gold, IT operations manager, Hawker Pacific explained: "We were difficult to get hold of and mobile roaming costs were extortionate. If someone has to call a number of different numbers to get hold of us, in a competitive industry like ours they'll just go somewhere else. We had to be easy to contact."

The Solution

NEC partner Voicepoint Communications instigated a complete review of the existing telephony infrastructure and recommended an IP based solution based around NEC's IPS2000 communications servers, and the Unified Communications for Business and Q-Master contact centre application suite. The new system utilised some existing equipment, but brought the communications network up to date with a platform for unified communications.

To begin with IP based phones were deployed at remote sites where only a few staff were based saving on the cost of having PABXs that were under utilised. This consolidated three separate physical sites into one virtual site with cost and maintenance savings. For the Brisbane site, this equated to ongoing telephony savings of \$1,000 a month.

In addition, softphones were deployed on laptops of travelling executives which cut individual mobile costs from \$300 a month to about \$120. It also meant that they had just one contact number making them more contactable wherever they are.

"People call me now thinking it's a land line number and I'll pick up from a hotel room in Singapore. It makes us easily contactable which is crucial in such a competitive industry."

The big win for Hawker Pacific was the use of unified messaging allowing faxes to come into the business as an email, making them easier to track, queue and manage. The call centre now receives orders from multiple communication channels all queued together in one system.

"The simple reduction in fax machines alone has saved us in the region of \$2000 a month. However, the ability to more effectively manage and process orders regardless of how we receive them has greatly increased efficiency and ensures everything is processed on time."

By automating order queuing and eliminating the manual fax process, Hawker Pacific's staff now have more time to speak to customers, process orders and focusing on delivering value to our customers.

"We have more time to do what we should, and less time running around."

Sophisticated and unified communications

Hawker Pacific is also trialing more sophisticated unified communications usage. The reception staff have rich presence functionality and PC based consoles providing them with real time updates and insight into the availability of key staff. They report noticeable savings in time and efficiency as they now don't have to spend all their time chasing people.

Taking presence a stage further, the management team are trialing a system that integrates voicemail to Outlook calendars, updating the message to explain where they are and when they'll be back. It allows callers to understand exactly when they should call back or when they can expect a response.

Jeremy Gold explained: "One of the key factors for us was to future proof our communications network and ensure it is unified communications ready. We're already experimenting with some of the additional functionality this can offer and it's certainly something we'll look to expand on down the line. We already plan to roll out some of the technology we're trialing now to the rest of the company."

The other major benefit for Hawker Pacific has been simplifying the management and maintenance of the communications system. The company now just needs to run one single server as opposed to its previous four; subsequently the maintenance and ongoing management time and costs are greatly reduced.

Hawker Pacific is protected by NEC's NECare service helping to ensure that its network is running at maximum uptime. This provides Hawker Pacific with guaranteed service response times, swap out equipment and 24/7 support.

"We needed extensive ongoing maintenance before, but with NEC it all runs itself. We have utmost confidence that the telephony system on which our business relies is in safe hands with NEC."

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Jeremy Gold, IT Operations Manager, Hawker Pacific

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