

Case study

## AmicusHorizon

# Housing association engages in a BT hothouse to find ways to better serve and listen to its customers

AmicusHorizon strives to improve the lives of its residents, not least by listening to them. But listening today takes many forms, and hearing alone is no longer enough. People want to express their opinions online, in text, and on the web.

Martin Crouch and others were offered the opportunity to engage in a hothouse with BT at Adastral Park. As a direct result, an Avaya Aura Contact Center 6 was integrated with existing AmicusHorizon back office systems.

Now the company's old voice-only call centre has blossomed into full multimedia, allowing customers to choose the way they want to communicate. And Martin's tasting tangible fruit, with nearly 90 per cent of enquiries resolved right first time.

“The new BT Avaya contact centre will help us radically change the way we communicate with our customers, so that we can provide the best possible service and make the best use of our resources.”

Martin Crouch, ICT Operations Manager, AmicusHorizon



Working together

## AmicusHorizon

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## Avaya multimedia contact centre from BT means AmicusHorizon can cost effectively offer customers greater choice

### Challenge

One of the largest UK housing associations, AmicusHorizon manages over 28,000 homes across the south and south east of England including London. The company has a passion for service excellence, regularly engaging with its residents to identify opportunities for business improvement.

Keen to benefit from new technology, AmicusHorizon visited Adastral Park, the world-renowned BT R&D centre. This led to a BT hothouse engagement. As an intensive three-day BT-hosted event, a hothouse kick starts the innovation process by bringing together clients with BT experts and third party thought leaders.

Martin Crouch, ICT Operations Manager at AmicusHorizon, recalls: “Around 50 of our people attended the hothouse. We worked in groups to analyse and seek to resolve business issues. One of the focus areas that emerged for improvement was our call centre, which was only equipped to handle voice.”

The AmicusHorizon call centre is central to its business, dealing with around 12,000 customer calls per day. Martin continues: “Broadening our communication channels would make us easier to do business with.”

### Solution

Offering a single 0800 number from BT Inbound Contact services for ease of contact, the AmicusHorizon call centre had been equipped with an Avaya CC6 platform. “We decided to upgrade to Avaya Aura Contact Center 6,” explains Martin Crouch. “This would provide full multimedia capability. Alongside voice communications it would equip us to deal with email enquiries, instant messages, text messages, and real time online web chat.”

As well as its multimedia capabilities, the Avaya Aura Contact Center 6 dual processor architecture offers far greater stability and resilience. It also features an advanced graphical user interface, offering drag and drop functionality. This greatly simplifies administrative functions, such as the creation and maintenance of agent groups and call routing tables. The solution also includes an interactive voice response system to help optimise call routing, as well as Call Pilot voice messaging.

A BT professional services team developed bespoke computer telephony integration links to back office systems. Implementation took around one month and was completed without service interruption. “As soon as the BT project manager was appointed everything moved really fast,” recalls Martin Crouch. “The BT engineers are one of the main reasons we stay with BT. They were absolutely brilliant, and really understood what we wanted.”

### Value

The contact centre is staffed by 100 agents organised into different skill sets. As well as supporting multimedia communication channels, the new contact centre is far more flexible. For example, agents can log in from any phone on the network, making it easier for AmicusHorizon to respond to unexpected peaks in demand. It’s also easier to administer and gives a high degree of investment protection.

Martin Crouch says: “The Avaya upgrade path means we have been able to reuse much of our existing hardware, which made the project very cost effective. We are saving time and effort too. For example, more straightforward administration is saving me at least half a day’s work every week.”

The SIP-based architecture of the Avaya Aura Contact Center 6 means that further cost savings are within reach. For example, AmicusHorizon plans to upgrade its BT Internet Connect UK service to 100Mbps and route voice traffic between its sites over the internet, saving on call charges and line rental.

The success of the AmicusHorizon approach has been independently noted. Having already gained Customer Service Excellence accreditation – a new government standard building on the legacy of the Charter Mark – the company has won the 2011 European Small Contact Centre of the Year Award.

Martin Crouch concludes: “The new BT Avaya multimedia contact centre enables us to perform to a very high standard. Now, nearly 90 per cent of all enquiries are successfully resolved right first time.”




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