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Telephone Exchange Cuts Costs

Car dealership OMC is motoring ahead thanks to a new Avaya telephone system that has slashed running costs.

The new digital network has improved efficiency and made substantial savings for the company.

A recent report by Which? magazine revealed that reassessing telephone systems and switching suppliers can save a small fortune and OMC have proved the point.

Fellow Oldham based company Plum Communications managed to reduce the number of line rentals at OMC from 70 to 30, which cut the bill from a national provider from £750 to £375 a month.

Plus by using Plum for line management and call service, their phone bills are now 30 per cent cheaper.

Those savings mean that within three years, the sophisticated new equipment will have paid for itself.

The digital systems, devised and installed by Plum, have also helped improve efficiency and customer service at the respected Ford specialists.

Robin Eglin, managing director of OMC, which has been trading for almost 100 years and has two dealerships and four body shops, said:

"We are delighted with the new systems. They have certainly saved us money. We pay a lot less per minute for calls and it has improved customer service.

"It is really important to us that the phone is answered within a few rings.

"The new systems are very efficient at dealing with calls and it is flexible. The staff like them too.

He added: "We looked around and chose Plum Communications because they are very competitive price wise and they give a much better and more personal service than the big telephone companies."

Before the new systems were installed, there were two operators who answered all the calls. Now if the operator is busy on a call, there is no queuing because an interactive voice system enables callers to access the department they need.



✦ Each department in the various OMC branches has its own direct dial number, which means customers can bypass the central reception altogether if they want to.

Calls are very seldom lost thanks to a call diverting system which allows access members of staff even when they are in another office and a voice mail that also sends an email message to alert staff.

Members of the management and sales team now have portable phones, which means they are not desk bound in the showroom and can be out on the forecourt dealing with customers and answering calls.

The DECT system means that OMC's tannoy system is practically redundant.

The volume and duration of calls can also be viewed on computer and each OMC site is now billed separately, which has helped with accounting.

Peter Savic, lead telecoms consultant and founder of Plum Communications said: "We carried out a telecoms analysis for OMC and looked at what they wanted and what would be useful and recommended the Avaya IP Office System.

"I'm really pleased that it has helped them and I advise all businesses to assess their telephone costs because invariably if you have had the same system and the same supplier for some time, there's a good chance you can make substantial savings by switching to Plum Communications.

"Invariably the equipment pays for itself pretty quickly."

He added: "The other spin off with a new digital system is that it improves customer satisfaction.

"OMC and Ford take that very seriously. It's very important to them that they answer the phones quickly within a few rings, especially in the parts departments, which is a volume business.

"Customer service is something we take very seriously too and that has helped us grow the business."

A Which? magazine survey revealed that smaller telephone companies offer a better customer service than the big national providers.

It also showed that seven out of ten people who switched to a different phone company ended up paying less and nine out of ten found switching easy.

Neil Fowler, Editor of Which? magazine, said: "Our survey results are bad news for established providers like BT and NTL. People have more options than ever and if they're not happy with the service it's easy to leave and find a better deal.

OMC are Ford Main dealers with offices, showrooms, workshops and parts centres in Oldham and Rochdale.

Independent bodyshops are located in Oldham, Rochdale, Halifax, Castleford, Milnrow and Worsley.

information

OMC Ford sites were supplied with an Avaya Telephone System comprising

Category 5 cabling and patch cabinet installation
IP Office 406 V2 System with ISDN30 Primary Rate
Expansion telephone modules
IP Office Digital Display Telephones
Standard telephones and DECT cordless phones as appropriate
Voicemail, Remote Management

ISDN30 with Direct Dialling (DDI) and broadband services with router and firewall are installed and maintained by Plum Communications

User software includes Phone Manager and Call Status

0845 numbers supplied by plum Communications are used for central service bookings
Out of hours breakdown calls are routed to an on call engineer

Support is provided by Plum Communications

Suzanne Triumphs with Great Run

Suzanne broke her £2,000 barrier when she completed her second Great North Run.

Suzanne Cain, took part in her sixth charity race and ran the half marathon to raise money for Children with Leukaemia.



Thanks to support from friends, family and colleagues at Plum Communications, where she is a customer services manager, she reached her target of £600 sponsorship for the event, taking her personal total to over £2,000.

Half of that amount came from Plum Communications which has supported her past efforts and has committed to backing her upcoming races.

"It was really good fun, and due to the efforts of the organisers it was one of the easier races I have run," said Suzanne, who completed the race in just over two hours.

"In fact, I was so inspired I have already signed up for next year's event and I have applied for a place in the London Marathon, too."

The keen exercise fanatic was joined in the run by husband Martin, who finished in one hour and 26 minutes.

"Naturally, we are immensely proud of Suzanne," said Plum Communications director Peter Savic.

"We know the dedication that training for events like these takes. It's very tough at times but she enjoys raising money for both Cancer Research UK and Children with Leukaemia and we are happy to support her."

Plum on Line

Plum customers can now take advantage of a new web based ordering system which allows orders to be placed for new lines and changes to existing lines.

The system has been written in house for Plum by Daniel Latter, a



final year honours software engineering student at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Daniel was introduced to Plum Communications by the Shell Step scheme this summer and is now employed in a part time role for the company when his studies allow.

Administrators of each company can set permission levels for their users. So for example a user can have permission to view line details but not place orders or may have ability to view lines at one location but not for another.

Existing usernames and passwords used to access bills on line can be used for the new features and all existing users will automatically be set up as administrators for their companies. They will then have ability to create new users if they wish.

New customers can also use the system and will be able to create a new account when ordering.

The new web site can be accessed from the main plum website www.plumcom.co.uk.

glossary

IVR

Interactive Voice Response

The ability to use a telephone and to interface with a database. Often use by call centres to customer queries, but can also be used in small companies where data needs to be communicated to customers. Supported by Avaya Voicemail Pro.

COST CENTRE CODE

Additional digits output by the telephone system which do not affect the routing of the call. These digits are then carried forward to the monthly bill and used for call analysis.

SMTP

Simple Mail Transfer Protocol

The standard for transmission of email across the internet. It is a text based protocol where one or more recipients are specified and then the message is transferred.

POP3

Post Office Protocol version 3

Often referred to as POP this is the standard protocol for retrieving email from a remote server over the internet. Nearly all individual subscribers use a mail client that uses POP3.



plumoffers

8Mb ADSL Broadband only £19 per month

Plum Customers can now purchase ADSL Broadband for just £19 per month plus VAT. Download speed is up to 8Mb depending upon distance from exchange and line quality.

This type of connections is intended for one or a few PCs. For larger locations we have an Office Service at £25 per month (plus VAT) which allows many PCs to share the same connection.

All Plum ADSL connections are provided with a static IP address, mail sending via SMTP and if required web space and email handling.

Plum also provide Domain registration and hosting and for customers on the move we provide web-mail which allows emails to be collected from the plum website.

Migration to the service is free and for a limited time the company is providing free activation subject to a minimum contract period.

To order email sales@plumcom.co.uk or call 0161 633 7335.

Mobile Line Rental from £4 per month

A wide range of handsets are available and full itemised billing is available through the on line service. High volume users can also benefit from special bundled tariffs. Full analysis of bills is available as part of the plum service.

A wide range of handsets are available and full itemised billing is available through the on line service. High volume users can also benefit from special bundled tariffs.

Single handsets can also be purchased on line from the Plum website www.plumcom.co.uk.

Free Analysis and Advice

Plum Communications is offering businesses a free review of their telephone services including analysis of current bills and survey of current equipment. These highly popular reviews have helped other businesses save several thousand pounds per annum and have provided advice on how to invest effectively in new technology.

For a free review of your bills and survey of your equipment please email peters@plumcom.co.uk.

Save 10% by buying on line from Plum Store

Purchase goods online from the plumstore at www.plumcom.co.uk (click on plumstore) and save 10% (only when buying on-line).

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