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Success has a ring to it

Hanging on the telephone is not an option for callers to Oldham's Enterprise Factory, thanks to the state of the art technology installed at this new Business Incubator Unit.

The newly installed Avaya IP Office System has been credited with helping to make the base for start up businesses one of the most successful of its kind in the country.



The Enterprise Factory opened in May in the Hathershaw area of Oldham and used the Government backed New Deal for Community and European Regional Development Fund to create managed workspaces for fledgling firms.

It was expected to take a year to fill, but after six weeks every office was let and there are now 14 tenants.

Director Peter Clothier says: "Before we opened I looked at other similar units and they all said that getting a good telephone communications system was the key to success.

"We chose Plum Communications because their price was competitive and as a telecoms provider the cost of calls through them are cheaper than the larger companies. They also had a sympathetic understanding of what we were trying to achieve.

"What we ended up with is efficient, easy to use and the call redirecting and voicemail facility give young companies credibility and ensures they don't lose business through lost calls."

Plum Communications, also based in Oldham, installed a bespoke Avaya IP Office digital system providing phone services and broadband connection

It gives each small business its own direct dial number. When tenants are unavailable they have a choice of forwarding to voicemail, redirecting to a mobile phone or a home phone or having the call answered with their company name by the Enterprise Factory receptionist. All the phones have the ability to forward messages automatically to email.

Plum have also supplied an email handling system that gives tenants their own email address, accessible remotely access via the internet.

Sophisticated call logging software was installed, which allows the Enterprise Factory to automatically send an itemised bill to each tenant every month and lets ➔

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✦ tenants check their bills whenever they like, so they can keep a close eye on costs.

The system also provides hotel style phone billing for anyone who wants to book an office or meeting room by the hour.

Despite its rich features the Avaya IP Office system is simple to use so very little training is required for new tenants.

Peter Savic, lead consultant on the project said: "The Enterprise factory is a wonderful resource, which gives a good start to new businesses and we worked hard to make sure that the communications system would provide real benefits to tenants of the Enterprise Factory.

"As a single source supplier we provided cabling, installation and support and we put a tailor made, affordable package together to suit the Enterprise Factory's needs.

"The system is flexible and it is easy to use. If they have a new tenant, they can be set up with a new telephone number and get them on line within four minutes. It would take days, possibly weeks, if you had multiple providers and that would also be very expensive for a start up business.

"This way they get a best of breed service which costs them nothing but the calls."

Peter Clothier adds: "One of the best things about the Plum system is that it is also future proof and gives us the capacity to expand, which I can certainly see happening."

Great North Run

Suzanne Cain is in training for her sixth charity race as she prepares for October's gruelling Great North Run.



She will line up alongside world record half-marathon holder Paul Tergat and BBC News presenter Bill Turnbull to compete on the streets of Newcastle and Gateshead whilst raising money for Children with Leukaemia.

It will be a second appearance in the 13.1 mile race for Suzanne, who has also previously taken part in four of Cancer Research UK's fundraising runs and has raised over £1500 for charity.

A keen fan of exercise, Suzanne started running ten years ago when she took up a new position as customer services manager at Plum Communications which was a desk based job compared to her previous work in the textile industry.

Soon this turned into distance running and she hasn't looked back since.

"I can't wait," said Suzanne of this year's Great North Run. "It's really good fun and I am genuinely looking forward to it."

Colleagues at Plum Communications have also voiced their support and dipped into their pockets to back the cause.

information

The Enterprise Factory were supplied with an Avaya Telephone System comprising

Category 5 cabling and patch cabinet installation
IP Office 406 V2 System with ISDN30 Primary Rate Card
30 port standard telephone module
IP Office 5420 Display Telephone
Gemini Speakerphones, Sensor 500 Telephones, DECT mobile handset
Voicemail, AI Office Call Logger, Remote Management

ISDN30 with DDI and broadband services with router and firewall are installed and maintained by Plum Communications

User software includes Phone Manager and Call Status

Email solution includes domain registration and hosting, web hosting, control panel for email set up and email access via webmail or Outlook Client

"We are really proud of her and her past achievements," said Plum Communications director Peter Savic. "Not only will we be chipping in with some financial backing for a worthy charity, but we will be offering plenty of moral support over the coming months!"

The company has so far pledged £300, helping to reach the target of raising at least £600 for Children with Leukaemia.

Suzanne said: "I run for cancer charities, too, because you never know who it will affect. One day I would like to compete in the London Marathon."

If you would like to sponsor Suzanne, please contact her at Plum Communications on 0161 633 7335 or email suzannec@plumcom.co.uk

The stepping stone to success

A Salford University student has seen eight weeks of hard work pay off when the website she coded went live and straight into commercial use.

Clare Barrington, 21, redesigned the web site for Plum Communications as part of her Step placement in industry.



Paired up as part of a program designed to give students experience of the work place, Clare has been working with Oldham-based Plum Communications over the summer to create an online catalogue for the company's communications products.

She has been able to utilise the skills, including PHP, Photoshop and Quark, which she has been honing on her Multimedia and Internet Technology course at Salford University.

The Droylsden student also produced a newsletter and redesigned the company's marketing material combining the existing Plum logo with additional designs.

"It has been a very enjoyable and worthwhile experience," said Clare. "It has also been hard work but this is my chosen career and it was an ideal opportunity for me to experience the business environment."

"I worked closely with managing director Peter Savic who was fantastic. He was very supportive

and spared a lot of time to help me. He was much more friendly and easy to work with than your average boss!"

Peter Savic said: "Clare worked enthusiastically throughout the project and has produced work to be proud of. The standard is of a quality one would expect from a professional design agency.

"I think the Step program, initially founded by Shell to place students in businesses, is a useful scheme and I would encourage others students and businesses to take part."

"I am very pleased for Clare and hope her time with us has been as valuable to her as it has been to us. She has been a credit to herself and I wish her well in her future studies."

Clare is now taking a year out to carry on working in industry before completing her third and final year in 2007.

You can view the new look website at www.plumcom.co.uk

glossary

ISDN

Integrated Services Digital Network
Most commonly used for voice traffic in the UK but can also be used for data and is often referred to as Digital Exchange Lines.

ISDN2 is supplied in circuits of 2 channels which can be linked and is usually delivered over underground copper cables.

ISDN30 is supplied in circuits of 30 channels with minimum of 8 channels and circuits can be linked and is usually delivered over underground copper or fibre or cables.

ADSL

Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line
It works by splitting an existing telephone line signal into two for simultaneous transmission of voice and data. ADSL technology can work at up to 8Mbps download although this is dependant upon distance from the exchange and telephone line quality. Upload speeds are lower and hence this is why it is "asymmetric", because the download speed is different to the upload speed.

Broadband

Describes data connectivity at speeds higher than modem speed (64kbps) therefore ADSL is an example of a Broadband Service.



plumoffers

Save 10% when buying on line from Plum Store

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

To encourage visitors to the new look on-line store there is an incentive to save 10% when purchasing goods on line from the store. The offer is open to all purchasers and an existing account is not necessary. Goods may be purchased by credit or debit card or account holders can choose to have goods billed to their account.

There are thousands of products in the store for next delivery, with items from basic telephones and headsets to sophisticated telephone systems.

The offer applies to goods located in the Plum Store and excludes broadband, telephone line orders, firewalls and routers.

If you have difficulty in choosing the right product please email sales@plumcom.co.uk for advice on the best product to suit your needs.

Mobile Line Rental from £4 per month

Plum's mobile phone service is proving highly popular with line rentals from £4 per month for companies with five or more mobiles and calls from 6p per minute (prices subject to VAT).

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.

Residential customers and consumers can purchase 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 where appropriate provided good advice on how to invest effectively in new technology.

Managing Director Peter Savic believes that relationships are important and new customers are chosen on the criteria of the long term value that they and Plum Communications will generate from the relationship. The majority of new clients are referred by other existing customers and we find that they will stay with us for many years - some customers are still clients after 20 years of service.

If you would like a free review of your current bills and survey of your equipment please contact peters@plumcom.co.uk for a no obligation analysis.

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