INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE OPERATION SEES THE LIGHT WITH NEW, RELIABLE COMMUNICATION SOLUTION

The Customer

Employing more than 200 staff across the UK, Australia and New Zealand, Mr Fothergill's began as a small, family-run business, blossoming into a leading name in the seed, agriculture retail and gardening industry, with a heritage built on excellence, innovation and unwavering commitment to its customers.

THE CHALLENGE

After multiple acquisitions, Mr Fothergill's found its telephony system had become disjointed, hindering collaboration across the group's brands and international teams, with no "bird's eye view" across the entire system to assess productivity and performance.

Each site leveraged a sperate PBX system from different suppliers, too, which meant that when outages occurred it was an uphill challenge to identify where the fault lay and who would be responsible for restoring the service.

Furthermore, the PBX systems prevented Mr Forthergill's from launching hybrid working policies across the organisation.

Laurence Pitts, Mr Fothergill's Group IT Operations Manager, knew the system needed a complete re-think set to work finding ways to optimise the business' IT stack. Researching best-in-class platforms, Laurence decided that a Ring Central system would best meet his needs and after making contact, Future Voice was recommended to Laurence by RingCentral to support him through the transition.

"We did look at other, more established providers but Future Voice spoke to us like people – they had a really personal touch – and a true passion for customer service, not just the technology – so they were definitely the best fit for us because we needed that education and support."
Laurence Pitts, Group IT Operations Manager, Mr Fothergill's

THE SOLUTION

Understanding that all the different brands within Mr Fothergills (as well as all the teams that comprised those brands) had different workflows and challenges, the Future Voice team took the time to understand each brand and department's requirements before proposing both 8x8 and RingCentral solutions, each with unique benefits at different price points.

With the team unsure which would be best in the long-term, Future Voice concurrently built both systems in a test environment until it was clear that RingCentral's platform, paired with new Jabra headsets for agents, would best suit the varying needs of the organisation.

These test environments enabled for the different Brand Managers to see in real time how the call flow affected their teams and 'load test' the individual brand's teams.

Moving from a traditional PBX to a comprehensive contact centre solution was a significant change for the teams as well as their individual processes. For example, many terms used in the new system (such as Unavailable codes, Dispositions and Skills) were not previously used and therefore, needed to be integrated into their workflows and training processes.

Creating the test environment allowed them to get a better understanding on how the terminology affected the teams and explore how best to streamline call queues to maximise customer experiences and agent productivity.

"After exploring both options, RingCentral's user interface and integration capabilities with 3rd Party Contact Centre solutions were far better. So, in the end, choosing RingCentral meant we had more flexibility both in terms of reporting and agent functionality." Laurence Pitts

Once bespoke reporting tools were designed for each department and brand, a date to port all of the business' numbers was set. However, the date had to be changed, and even after informing the incumbent provider they didn't action the date-change, meaning all of Mr Fothergills' phone lines fell silent!

After a quick email to Future Voice, the team leveraged its industry connections to quickly roll out temporary numbers so that calls could come through, ensuring business continuity. And when the true port date came, everything went off without a hitch.

"There would have been a lot of steps for us to escalate the issue ourselves, but Future Voice sorted it all our for us and it was fixed within an hour!"
Laurence Pitts

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Mr. Fothergill's

THE RESULTS

Thanks to RingCentral's user-friendly interface, minimal training was required, and mostly for supervisors to manage wallboards and reporting tools, while agents could quickly find the functionality they required for their responsibilities.

Softphone apps on all laptops, desktops and mobiles has also meant that the business' teams can now work remotely and remain just as productive as when in the office, leading to massive productivity gains, and more satisfied staff who can better balance their work and home lives.

And, with the reporting functionalities delivered by Future Voice, stakeholders have a quantitative perspective on performance, ensuring any potential issues with seed batches, or gardening products can be efficiently handled.

New hardware, such as the noise cancelling Jabra headsets are also ensuring the very best caller experience, further enhancing brand perception, with crystal clear audio and no background noise to distract from interactions.

But that's not all! The partnership will continue to develop in the coming years as Mr Fothergill's looks to incorporate other features such as taking secure card payments over the phone, and creating custom IVRs for each brand under the same umbrella.

These will streamline processes as well as boost brand credibility even further in the coming years and, now that Laurence has the ideal foundations from which to build new caller services, he can't wait to see how the relationship flourishes in the future.

"One of the best aspects of working with Future Voice is that it's never been about just selling a system and that's it. We know our needs will evolve and we know Future Voice will be there to support us along the way and they've become a truly invaluable extension to our dream and our ambitions." Laurence Pitts

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Mr. Fothergill's