NO MONKEY BUSINESS: DELIVERING BRISTOL ZOO'S CRITICAL MIGRATION ON-TIME

The Customer

Bristol Zoo is one of the UK's most popular wildlife attractions, relying heavily on reliable communications to support customer, ticketing, fundraising and internal operations.

With peak visitor seasons driven by major marketing campaigns and public engagement initiatives, the organisation requires communications systems that can support high volumes of enquiries while enabling teams across the site to stay connected.

Future Voice had already established a trusted relationship, supporting Bristol Zoo's infrastructure and providing guidance on how an upgrade could support future needs.

THE CHALLENGE

Bristol Zoo was preparing for a major transition from Avaya Cloud Office to Zoom Phone with the migration overseen by a newly appointed IT Manager, Jonathan Drew, who was unfamiliar with the organisation's existing communications setup and needed to quickly gain confidence in both the current environment and the proposed solution.

Simultaneously, the zoo had invested heavily in a big marketing campaign starting in March, aimed at driving increased visitor numbers. This created a strict operational constraint: no communications system changes or go-lives could occur during this period.

Complicating matters further, an external cyber incident affecting COLT (the incumbent provider's SIP supplier) triggered a freeze on all UK number porting activity for four months. This unexpected disruption threatened to push the project timeline directly into the March blackout window, creating the risk of either delaying the migration or attempting a high-risk deployment during the zoo's busiest period.

The combination of strict operational deadlines, external disruption and a complex communications migration created a challenging scenario that required a flexible and highly proactive approach.

THE SOLUTION

Future Voice responded by redesigning the project approach to ensure Bristol Zoo could still meet its operational deadlines without introducing unnecessary risk.

Rather than pursuing a traditional full migration in a single phase, the team quickly pivoted to prioritise the Customer Service function. This ensured the most critical department was fully operational and trained on the new platform before the end of February, allowing them to manage the anticipated increase in visitor enquiries driven by the marketing campaign.

To support the newly appointed IT Manager, Future Voice created a comprehensive documentation pack detailing the zoo's existing RingCentral configuration. This meant the IT team did not need to spend valuable time learning the legacy environment and could instead focus on managing and optimising the new Zoom platform.

Recognising the realities of a large visitor attraction, Future Voice also drove adoption of the Zoom mobile app to reduce reliance on fixed hardware, simplify device management and provide a practical solution for staff needing freedom to be contactable across the site.

During the process, Future Voice also intervened when the previous carrier attempted to enforce a 12-month contract renewal due to the porting delays. By providing detailed documentation and evidence, the team ensured Bristol Zoo could successfully contest the claim, protecting the heavily budget-limited organisation from unnecessary costs.

THE RESULTS

Despite the external disruption and strict operational deadlines, the migration was completed successfully and ahead of the zoo's busiest season.

While the nationwide porting freeze could have derailed the project entirely, Future Voice remained actively engaged throughout the process. The Customer Service team was fully trained and operational on the new Zoom platform in time to support the marketing-driven increase in enquiries, ensuring visitor communications remained smooth during a critical period for revenue maximisation.

Beyond the migration, Future Voice also helped Bristol Zoo unlock additional value from the platform, identifying further operational improvements, like Zoom Meetings and display licences to enhance internal collaboration and front-of-house information displays.

Powerpack licences were also introduced, providing the customer experience team with more advanced call management capabilities and deeper visibility into performance.

By adapting the deployment strategy, supporting the IT team with detailed documentation and advocating for the customer during contractual challenges, the team ensured Bristol Zoo entered its busiest season with a reliable, scalable communications platform and the confidence that their technology partner was fully invested in their success.

"Future Voice were exceptional throughout the migration. The porting freeze created a really difficult situation, that could have spiralled costs.

But rather than stepping back, the team adapted the plan quickly and rallied behind us, making sure our incumbent could not renew their contract and ensuring our customer service function was ready before our busiest period.

That flexibility and commitment made me sure I had made the right decision in continuing to work with Future Voice and long may it continue!"

Jonathan Drew, IT Manager, Bristol Zoo