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Nigel Boyle, Administration and Technical Director, PD Hook

Power to you



Converged data and telephony plans to boost productivity at PD Hook



PD Hook is a family run business that has supplied poultry products to leading high-street stores for more than 60 years.

The company hatches around 5.6 million chicks each week from its 200 farms across the UK. Price wars have squeezed margins throughout the retail supply chain, and the fiercely competitive poultry business is no exception.

To be successful, PD Hook needs to maintain close control of every aspect of chick production – including costs. However, historically this task has been made more complicated by patchy fixed-line and mobile communications within and around farms and nearby rural locations.

This has been a major problem for farm workers who rely on mobile voice and email communications to keep in regular contact with managers to discuss day-to-day production issues.

Multiple suppliers

Important emails were often delayed, calls not connected or signals lost during conversations. To try to improve the situation, the company allowed employees to choose their own local network provider. But the policy ran into problems chiefly because of the additional cost of maintaining contracts with multiple suppliers.

Nigel Boyle, Administration and Technical Director at PD Hook knew that a single supplier with the necessary network connectivity and coverage was required to deliver both the communications solution and associated cost savings.

"We looked at each of the leading providers to find the best offer. We also asked employees which they preferred and why," recalls Boyle. Feedback from staff put Vodafone at the top of the list of suppliers.

"The majority of comments were in favour of Vodafone, saying they thought it provided the best coverage and customer service and was easier to get new connections and device support compared with other service providers."

Once Boyle looked at the comments from employees and a cost proposal, he appointed Vodafone. The company successfully moved mobile and fixed-line voice and data connections over to Vodafone without any disruption.

Employees could make low-cost calls to company mobiles and UK landlines from their mobile phones helping the business to make the savings it was seeking.

Less administration

PD Hook has reduced costs by around £72,000 a year by moving to Vodafone for its fixed-line and mobile communication needs. In addition, there is less administration with just a single supplier, and the company expects productivity to increase further as it converges telephony and data networks.

These benefits are playing a significant role in the company's battle to maintain margins in the face of constant pressure from supermarkets to lower prices. "We've succeeded in adopting better ways of working - Vodafone has helped us achieve the efficiencies we need to drive growth," says Boyle.

Improved communications and collaboration are also ensuring that there is less chance of over-producing chicks – which increases profitability. Network coverage is better at every farm, so it's easier for them to communicate to discuss orders. "We're helping employees manage production more precisely," says Boyle.

Today the IT team spends more time on strategic planning instead of day-to-day administration thanks to streamlined processes with a single communication supplier. The work that it focuses on – such as fixed and mobile convergence – is more valuable in ensuring future savings for the business. Besides this, managers have a clearer insight into communication costs across the company, enabling the business to make smarter decisions on communication strategy.

"By moving to unified communications, we will be able to increase business performance and reduce our infrastructure and management costs."

Nigel Boyle, Administration and Technical Director, PD Hook

Increased business performance

PD Hook plans to help employees work more effectively with colleagues and customers in the future through integrating fixed-line and mobile networks to create a unified communications platform.

Eventually, telephony and computer networks could be converged and employees will be able to communicate using voice, email, or messaging through their PCs and laptops. Boyle says: "By moving to unified communications, we will be able to increase business performance and reduce our infrastructure and management costs."

Today, employees are collaborating more closely than ever, using a range of fixed-line, mobile voice and data solutions. Meanwhile area managers are communicating more effectively with farm managers using voice and email in areas where, in the past, connectivity problems often made this an impossibility.

Significant benefits

- PD Hook has reduced costs by around £72,000 a year by moving to Vodafone for its fixed-line and mobile communication needs
- The IT team delivers greater value to the business now that it spends less time managing multiple suppliers
- Network coverage is better at every farm, so it's easier for them to communicate to discuss and monitor the progress of customer orders
- Improved communications and collaboration is ensuring that there is less chance of over-producing chicks – which increases profitability
- Managers have a clearer insight into communication costs across the company, enabling the business to make smarter decisions on communication strategy

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