



"It's been a transformational process, achieved through a partnership based on trust, transparency and hard work, and that's what we have with Vodafone."

Tony Scarvaci, Group IT Manager, Alumasc

*power to you*



# Alumasc transforms business with unified communications from Vodafone



In recent years Alumasc has completed a remarkable transformation in its business. With a rich heritage dating back more than 70 years and including spells in gold mining and the manufacture of aluminium beer barrels, the company is now one the UK's most successful operators in its chosen markets.

The common denominator between the Alumasc of yesteryear and the Alumasc of today is engineering excellence. The skills acquired over decades of expert product design and manufacturing remain within the business and are at the heart of Alumasc's modern reputation for high performance building and precision engineering products.

Alumasc is now a major manufacturer and supplier of building products and materials that are used in the construction of sustainable buildings that must meet new and exacting environmental standards set by Government.

Alumasc products enable customers to manage and conserve the energy and water use in their buildings and help them to reduce the lifecycle costs of operating those buildings. Within the group is expertise in solar shading incorporating electricity-generating photovoltaic cells, rainwater harvesting systems and green roofing, promoting energy efficiency and biodiversity.

With its new business model now proven and successful in the UK, Alumasc is now increasingly turning its attentions to growing its burgeoning overseas activities in Europe, North America, the Middle and Far East and South Africa, where demand for their expertise and products is strong.

## Strategic acquisitions

With Alumasc's rapid growth, achieved in part through a number of strategic acquisitions in recent years, has come a variety of IT and telecoms challenges for internal teams trying to manage business infrastructure during a period of rapid change.

"Until recently the businesses and divisions within the group were operated independently with their own emails and telephone systems," recalls IT Manager Tony Scarvaci. "With the number of recently-acquired businesses this was understandable as the driver was to bring those businesses within the group and to sort out infrastructure issues later.

"But there was a clear understanding that the absence of a co-ordinated approach across the group created a range of issues and missed opportunities. We had multiple telecoms suppliers and variable service quality, a lack of transparency and a definite lack of central control on costs."

By the time a major management restructuring led to the appointment of a Group Finance Director responsible for group-wide IT and telecoms strategy, Tony Scarvaci had already completed background work looking at how resources could potentially be consolidated and operations centralised to deliver a single, integrated infrastructure producing business benefits, cost savings and efficiencies.

"I knew this challenge was coming and I was clear that it made no sense to be dealing with multiple suppliers covering mobiles, network, data and the rest. I also knew that, with a very small internal team, we needed a partnership arrangement with an organisation that could take on what would be a substantial programme of work and deliver a fully managed and supported solution. The question was, who might that organisation be?"



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Tony Scarvaci, Group IT Manager, Alumasc



Another common denominator within Alumasc was its contract for mobile phones with Vodafone, which had operated successfully for a decade.

“Vodafone’s account management had always been very good and so when the scope and scale of this challenge became clear, it was natural that I would discuss it with Vodafone because we already had open lines of communication,” said Tony Scarvaci.

“When our Account Manager, Tony Devbhai, took me through the range of services that Vodafone provide I knew immediately that they could cover all the bases for Alumasc.

“I liked the strategic approach and I was able to use the trust and confidence that I had in Vodafone to convince colleagues that Vodafone was the right partner for Alumasc. I needed to be 100% certain and I was.”

#### Guaranteed speed and call quality

The business case for a comprehensive, managed service solution was approved and Vodafone set about replacing legacy systems with new fixed line systems for voice and data across the Alumasc group, now reorganised into a head office function and two operating divisions, Building Products and Precision Engineering Products.

Major capital expenditure was avoided and users were soon enjoying more bandwidth, extra functionality and improved capacity to successfully multitask while simultaneously at the computer screen and on the phone. Vodafone achieved this through the application of Wide Area Network optimisation technology to portion out bandwidth to guarantee the speed of data and call quality.

By standardising with Vodafone Alumasc have also been able to achieve significant savings through lower call costs and utilising reporting tools and usage visibility to improve the management of the telecoms estate and simplify billing arrangements.

Next Alumasc moved to Microsoft Office 365, providing users across the group with access to a wide range of cloud-based, enterprise level Office applications and functionality.

Staff now have the capability to work securely from virtually anywhere with access to company systems, documents and email together with the ability to conference and synchronise calendars.

This delivered two key objectives for Alumasc. The first was the consolidation and sharing of common systems, such as email, across the group, together with more efficient, flexible and productive working practices. The second was the removal of the need for major capital expenditure on hardware and the associated costs of managing and maintaining hardware, replaced by predictable monthly costs for defined services.

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#### Added value

And to take these benefits a stage further, when discussing options for new handsets as part of negotiations for the renewal of Vodafone's mobile contract, Alumasc decided to move from its Blackberry base to Nokia Lumia phones, opening up the prospect of further standardisation on the Windows platform.

Nokia Lumia smartphones come with full versions of Microsoft Office, Outlook and Internet Explorer 10 enabling users to create and edit PowerPoint, Excel and Word documents when they're away from the office.

"This is a great example of how working with Vodafone has provided the level of added value that we had anticipated at the outset," says Tony Scarvaci. "Upgrading to Nokia Lumia provides additional opportunities for improved communications and smarter working. We received training and support in the use of the new phones to make sure our people were making full use of all the additional services that come with the phones.

"We are now well on the way to having a unified communications platform, across the Alumasc group, which is supporting overall business strategy. It's been a transformational process that could only have been achieved through a partnership based on trust, transparency and hard work, and that's what we have with Vodafone.

"It is still early days and there are further elements that we will implement over time, but feedback from the board to staff on the ground has been overwhelmingly positive. It's a little difficult to quantify all the benefits just yet but we can see them every day."

#### Significant benefits

- A unified communications platform has contributed to a business transformation for Alumasc, enabling a major corporate restructuring
- By moving from multiple suppliers to a Vodafone managed service, Alumasc has a long term strategic partner to assist the business with growth and expansion plans
- Alumasc enjoys consistent service standards, a single point of contact and much simplified account management and administration
- Major capital expenditure on hardware and ongoing maintenance costs were avoided
- Application of various technologies and solutions have resulted in improved communications within the business, smarter and more flexible working practices and cost and efficiency savings
- Ongoing support ensures that Alumasc reap the full benefits of the solutions

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