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power to you



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Established in 1911, Thorntons is now the largest independent chocolate and confectionary business in the UK. The much-loved chocolate brand is celebrating its Centenary this year and currently has over 350 stores and 200 franchises nationwide, and employs more than 4,500 chocolate lovers across the UK.

Thorntons recently found that it had unnecessary duplication in its communications, with no distinct lines of responsibility and a lack of clarity in its management. It was working with five different suppliers of fixed line services and there was no overall ownership within the company.

To reduce expenditure and to simplify management, Thorntons decided it needed to consolidate all of its fixed and mobile communications with a single supplier.

“We wanted to talk to a solution provider who was interested in Thorntons,” says Steve Harris, Head of IT at Thorntons. “We needed to partner with a company who shared our vision of the future and someone we could grow with. We didn’t want to talk to a sales manager at the end of a phone.”

Straightforward migration

Having reviewed the available options in the market, Thorntons chose Vodafone to provide both its fixed line and mobile communications. “Vodafone came up with the strongest combined offering,” says Steve.

Vodafone provided a solution that included 500 fixed lines and 195 mobile handsets. To enable Thorntons staff to access the Internet on their laptops when they are away from the office, Vodafone supplied PC datacards that provide high-speed 3G connectivity.

The whole system went live in November, a critical time for Thorntons in the run up to Christmas. Everything went smoothly, as Steve explains: “Everyone was using Vodafone infrastructure, whether it was a phone or a till and we found we were in a safe pair of hands.

“We relied on Vodafone at our busiest time of year,” says Steve.

“We had lines going into stores for chip and pin as well as for voice and if anything had gone wrong it would have had a severe impact on our ability to trade effectively.”

Towards Unified Communications

By consolidating its suppliers for fixed and mobile communications, Thorntons has been able to demonstrate cost savings in line with its original targets. “We’ve tracked the reduction in expenditure that we’ve been able to achieve with Vodafone, and overall we’ve benefited from a 29% saving,” says Steve.

With a single vendor, management is easier, communications simplified and Thorntons has much improved visibility over the entire infrastructure. It has also found that Vodafone has been responsive to work with, as Steve comments: “The service and support is excellent - we look on Vodafone as a strategic partner.”

With fixed and mobile both from one supplier, Thorntons has built the foundations for Unified Communications. This has the potential to provide significant benefits to the way its staff work together, improving their efficiency and their ability to collaborate.

“Vodafone demonstrated where it was going, and showed us how we could benefit from its roadmap,” says Steve. “We have made the initial step with fixed lines and mobile and we know the route to grow in the future to a full Unified Communications solution.”

