

claranet

Upgrading an Avaya infrastructure for a future proof solution



Founded in 1996, Claranet has evolved from being a pioneering ISP (Internet Service Provider) into an MSP (Managed Services Provider) with annual revenues of around €100 million. They have 520 employees with an international footprint in seven countries.

Claranet aims to bring together the best people, process and technology to provide flexible, secure and cost-effective managed services that guarantee network and application performance. They allow customers to focus on their core business, not IT management.

Claranet managed services, with integrated security, range from Internet access to MPLS, IPSec VPN and from co-location through to managed application hosting. The company has some 500+ peers, 16 data centres, 6 Gb/sec traffic, and their own core network.

Quality and innovation sit at the heart of Claranet's offer. The business is ISO 9001:2000 accredited and has ITIL processes across all business operations. It was the first UK service provider to offer IPv6 enabled networks.

Drivers for Change

Claranet had installed Avaya INDeX systems as supplied by Avaya Gold Partner, Reading based IP Integration. However, the company was aware that their aging Avaya systems went 'end of life' at the end of 2006 and with end of support being 05/09 Claranet knew they had to migrate to an alternative, longer term solution.

At the same time Claranet wanted to take the opportunity to put in place new technologies for networking their operational sites for voice and data. This included a strong desire to reduce their intra company call costs associated with ISDN30 trunks.

Additionally, in a highly competitive and service based market, Claranet wanted to put in place a critically resilient solution that included business continuity facilities for their clients should one of their data centres fail.

Claranet issued an invitation to tender for solutions to meet these needs in August 2008. IP Integration won that tender in the face of competition from a number of large system integrators. The IP Integration supplied solution went live in October 2009.

Locations

Claranet has five principal locations that IP Integration had to address with their solutions:

- Warrington (30 staff)
- Holborn, the main office in London where there are 200-250 staff plus the contact centre with about 80 staff.
- The two data centres in London docklands
- The Network Operations Centre (NOC) also in docklands which has relatively few staff.

Solutions and Components

Avaya Gold Reseller IP Integration determined that a solution based upon Avaya Communications server technology with connectivity provided by SIP trunks rather than ISDN would deliver a communications platform that would meet all of Claranet's needs.

The initial phase of the implementation included the following products and applications:

- Shared S8730 Avaya Communications Server. This server would normally reside within the same site connected by a dark fibre link between them with a less than 8 millisecond communications latency in a constant mirroring state for back up and resilience.
- The benefit of Claranet effectively having their own Metropolitan Area Network in London is that they can control the latency and speed of those links. IP Integration was therefore able in this instance to split servers so that should for example a meteorite strike data centre one any calls that were in progress would be maintained via data centre two.
- Replacement of all legacy ISDN with SIP trunks to provide geographic number flexibility, call bursting for peaks alongside the attraction of a significant reduction in rental and ongoing call costs.
- A Verint call recording system complete with Quality Monitoring for screen capture so Claranet can see what the contact centre agents are doing. 80 channels were provided for contact centre call recording which meant 100% of calls are recorded and contact centre application screens captured.
- Avaya Modular Messaging Server for full unified voicemail and email in the same mailbox using Microsoft Exchange Server as the message storage device.
- Avaya CMS Server: the call management server – the global call centre reporting package of choice in the industry.
- Avaya Applications Enablement Server – this provides the interface from where to connect third party applications such as the Verint call recording system.

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- PN1 and PN2 are Avaya G650 Gateways. The Gateways provide the system 'muscle'. These contain device cards for media processing, establishing IP calls, Analogue cards and other applications.
- IP Integration also designed custom CTI wallboards for the London contact centre. Features include; presenting information not just about what is going on with the voice calls but also what is going on inside the Claranet Help Desk management system as well. For example, the number of calls they have closed. This adds business value to the core call metrics.
- Voice prioritisation. A QoS (Quality of Service) enabled Cisco LAN infrastructure with power over Ethernet (PoE) to support IP handsets at each site.
- IP Integration Gold 24x7x365 service and maintenance contract.

Supplier Selection

Claranet chose IP Integration as their supplier as the company was able to demonstrate a number of key benefits across their business units:

IP Integration could provide Claranet with a very high level of support around all points of the solution – they were the incumbent supplier and had successfully maintained an excellent relationship through adding value whilst consistently looking after Claranet's communications systems for over ten years.

Additionally Claranet liked IP Integration's technical understanding of Avaya systems and the overall integrated solution, where their ability to differentiate themselves significantly throughout the tender process, was a significant factor.

Further, the technical recommendations IP Integration were making on the solution design and assistance provided to Claranet in formulating a strategy for unified communications moving forward were seen as significant benefits.

About IP Integration

Our goal is very simple: to help our clients derive the maximum benefit from technology through flexible tailored solutions, and we measure our success on your return on investment with us and on your continued loyalty, won through the excellence of service we guarantee to every one of our clients.

We know that developing the most successful communications infrastructure and managing new telephony, data and application services is a significant challenge facing businesses today. At IP Integration we understand that organisations must evolve their communications strategy, and through proven knowledge, experience and support, we provide complete business communications solutions.

Networks and Trunks

Being an ISP Claranet has its own network called KAME. They are using this network to deliver all their voice services between the five offices. Effectively it is its own WAN.

A total of 360 SIP trunks were installed by IP Integration Network Services into the data centres.

There were a number of reasons to switch from ISDN to IP Trunks including the business continuity and disaster recovery benefits afforded by SIP plus operational benefits from a cost perspective which provided a realistic return on investment.

The ability to port Claranet's existing number range, which was tied to the Holborn exchange, over to the docklands delivery point meant that Claranet could retain their numerous geographical numbers they have had for many years.

The Future...

IP Integration proposed and supplied this solution based upon Claranet's current and future needs. Phase two of the installation program will see CTI integration with Claranet's own global CRM platform (Oracle) and roll out to all the European offices. There are also plans to implement an audio and web conference bridges. A phased roll out of Avaya Gateways, served from the core London network will take place in to Claranet's European operation in Spain and Germany etc.

The solution provided by IP Integration met all Claranet objectives. Considering the wide range of applications and the sophistication of the solution, business disruption was virtually non-existent.

Claranet is a highly skilled organisation and IP Integration provided some very detailed high level training on the systems provided. This means that Claranet will only need to refer to IP Integration after having exhausted their own in house resource or more serious tier 2 or 3 escalations.

Our voice, data, and systems integration solutions embrace the technology of the converged multi-service network for businesses of all sizes and the partnerships we have developed with the industry's leading players coupled with our in-house bespoke software solutions allow us to offer unparalleled levels of application integration to our customers.

