



Case Study The Daily Express Newspaper



Founded in 1974, Northern and Shell Media Group has become a major force in British and worldwide news outlets, with a UK audience of more than 1.7 million. Titles include The Daily Express, Daily Star and celebrity magazines OK! New! and Star. The company operates in all major areas of publishing, with diverse interests in new media, print, distribution, investment and property.

Highlights

SynergyPlus's initial engagement with the Northern and Shell Media Group began shortly after their successful acquisition of Channel 5 in early 2011. We have now completed multiple projects across the Group including a managed service contract, SIP and hosted IP deployment and new wide area network (WAN).

"SynergyPlus has become our partner rather than just a supplier of services, and have successfully helped us navigate a path through the current and in to the future."

Simon Cohen, Group Head – Technology, to Express Newspaper/Daily Star/OK!

The Challenges

Project 1. The team at SynergyPlus were aware that the sites they already provided services for would be closed and relocated to the company's headquarters at 10 Lower Thames Street, EC3. SynergyPlus would be assisting with the successful termination of contracts at the previous sites.

Project 2. The relocation of their West Ferry Printworks to a new, state-of-the-art facility located within the Vauxhall Business Mall enterprise zone in Luton.

Project 3. Moving The Express LTS estate over to SIP.

The Solution

The team at SynergyPlus are frequently required to work closely with in-house IT departments. This relationship enabled the successful termination of contracts at the previous sites. The effectiveness of this resulted in Group Head of Technology, Simon Cohen promising to allow SynergyPlus to tender for future projects.

The decision to relocate their Northern & Shell West Ferry Printworks provided an opportunity for SynergyPlus to tender for a range of fully outsourced services, including: Hosted IP

telephony, support agreements, Data Connectivity and a cordless DECT phone solution across the whole site, including 'man down' facilities and a SIP trunk solution using DECT handsets.

The Outcome

After detailed discussions with Northern and Shell, SynergyPlus were awarded a long-term managed services contract for the Luton site in June 2011. The project was completed on time and on budget in November 2011. Following the success before, during and after the West Ferry project, SynergyPlus has maintained a strong working relationship with Northern and Shell, discussing working together in other areas of the business.

"As other contracts within the group have come up for renewal, the rapid advances in technology and with the group as a whole evolving, SynergyPlus have become our partner rather than just a supplier of services, and have successfully helped us navigate a path through the current and in to the future."

Simon Cohen, Group Head – Technology, Northern & Shell Media.



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Following the successful deployment at Westferry Printworks, SynergyPlus were invited to tender for upgrading and replacing their existing MPLS Corporate WAN plus the head office's Internet connections. The MPLS incorporated The Express Newspaper Group plus Luton & Preston Printworks, and Channel 5. Whilst advising Northern and Shell Media Group on WAN, the opportunity to design a SIP and Hosted IP deployment strategy for all its UK sites was presented.

Highlights

Previously working with Northern and Shell to secure significant cost savings, SynergyPlus added real value by providing a tried-and-tested roadmap into the business, offering SIP/Hosted IP as part of an overall business continuity/disaster recovery strategy.

"SynergyPlus came to my attention when N&S purchased Channel 5 Broadcasting Ltd. I was impressed with their professionalism as we rationalised the Channel 5 business and subsequently asked them to pitch for the IT contract at our Westferry Printers division which they won based on a combination of understanding our vision, price and performance."

Simon Cohen, Group Head – Technology, Northern & Shell Media

The Challenges

To design a SIP and Hosted IP deployment strategy, to achieve:

1. Complete migration with no 'big bang' risk to the business
2. Incorporate all UK sites
3. Limit/avoid downtime for the business
4. Deliver a disaster recovery process into the business

The Solution

SynergyPlus presented Simon Cohen, Group Head of Technology, with a detailed SIP roadmap strategy, incorporating all sites. The strategy was formed using a mix of PBX SIP licenses, SIP gateways and hosted handsets to bring each site 'on-net' depending on what infrastructure was in situ and what equipment assets the client was advised to sweat.

The way SynergyPlus designed their deployment strategy allowed Northern and Shell to feel confident at each stage of the process. By Q1 2013 the final stage of a SIP trial was deployed to allow the client to trust the service with no "big-bang" risk to the business. The migration to SIP was carried out seamlessly. Two separate number ports from Verizon were scheduled over the remainder of 2013 resulting in the successful and seamless migration of over 1,300 DDI numbers without any downtime.

The migration to SIP also allowed Northern and Shell to retain their long standing DDI ranges. This ensured business continuity from a client's perspective and injected valued, flexible, disaster recovery processes into the business in the event of an outage.

The added benefit of working with SynergyPlus on Ethernet data connectivity and SIP is the use of private secure IP connections to their SIP provider – ensuring no calls "bump" over the public internet – and the registration to two IP "exchanges" added another layer of resilience. Should one IP exchange go down, the second will automatically be assigned to allow the business to continue functioning as normal.

The Outcome

To enable the client to have end-to-end managed solutions, the support of the client's legacy Mitel 3300 Mx estate was novated to SynergyPlus in Q1 2012, with a unique offering of free support of the Mitel estate covered by the savings achieved by moving to SIP from Verizon direct access ISDN30 circuits; eliminating the large annual support invoice. A monthly report is sent to Simon Cohen, Group Head of Technology, to allow the business to see clearly how much these savings have contributed to the annual support fee. The best gauge of a successful deployment is that Simon has regularly recommended SynergyPlus to other businesses who are looking at migrating to SIP.