

## Case Study

### Horse Racing Ireland



HORSE RACING  
IRELAND

# Migrating to IP on a budget with BT telephony solution

Evergreen approach uses hybrid kit to protect  
existing assets

## Executive summary

When Horse Racing Ireland (HRI) moved into a purpose-built headquarters in the Curragh, Co. Kildare, it needed a new telephone system. The semi-state organisation welcomed the opportunity to migrate to IP telephony and the improved functionality that the technology can deliver but it was equally anxious to sweat the assets of its existing investments.

Migrating to IP PBX telephone systems has become the natural progression for businesses as they look for systems that interoperate with the PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network) and deliver voice over data networks that are easier to manage and more cost-effective to run.

In its old premises HRI had used traditional communications systems built on a digital network. "They are less flexible than IP and more expensive to maintain but they are also very reliable," said a BT spokesperson, "rather than abandon a trusted asset, HRI wanted to invest in a hybrid solution that allowed legacy kit to integrate with IP for a phased migration."

Vincent Liffey, Technical Services Manager, HRI, explained how they arrived at BT as the preferred supplier. "We went to competitive tender and BT won through based on weightings around cost and the suitability of the solution"

He was pleased with the outcome: "The implementation went well and within a day we were up and running. I'd give BT ten of ten for the work they did."

BT supplied and installed the Nortel CS 1000 which delivers all the benefits of a converged IP network but can also integrate with traditional telephone equipment as required. It also

supports more advanced IP features but the priority for HRI was to buy a system that would meet the needs of the 100 employees in the office without breaking the bank.

For Liffey the BT IP system has provided the perfect stepping stone: "It cuts costs and gives us more control than we ever had before but still lets us use our old handsets. It also means that we will be well positioned to explore IP functionality further down the road when we emerge from the current economic downturn."

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**Vincent Liffey**  
Technical Services Manager  
HRI

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### The Business Case

IHRI was set up to develop and promote Ireland as a world centre of excellence for horse racing and breeding. Responsibilities include the development and promotion of the Irish horse racing industry, including the development of authorised racecourses and the guaranteeing of prize money at race fixtures. In their daily work, its 100 employees are constantly in contact with trainers and owners, often working to tight deadlines to ensure that Ireland's hectic racing schedule is kept on track.

Like most businesses, the telephone system is a business critical component and it was an investment priority when HRI moved into green field premises in Kildare. The organisation also wanted to use the move as an opportunity to bring several autonomous sections within HRI onto the one system. At the same time, it was operating on a tight budget and anxious to protect the investment in its existing PBX system that used digital technology.

The last few years have seen the fast growth of IP networks that deliver voice and data over the same wire. In terms of telephony they also open the door to cost-savings and greater efficiencies. It was the obvious route for HRI to go but it also needed a solution that would let it reuse its existing handsets.

BT won the tender with a proposal to implement a hybrid system, the Nortel CS 1000, along with Nortel switches and some additional third-party software. A full-featured IP PBX, the CS1000 has over 750 telephony features, built-in reliability and survivability and can be fully distributed over IP local and wide area infrastructure.

Because it had limited funds and was anxious to reuse its existing stock of desk phones, HRI invested in 20 IP handsets. This would save the organisation 15 per cent on the overall cost of the CS 1000 system. The plan is to introduce more users to the full benefits of IP telephony over time.

"A strong selling point with BT is that we have an evergreen philosophy," said BT. "Once you have made an investment you don't have to rip it out and replace it. We can upgrade the software, let customers stay

with their digital handsets and gradually migrate to an IP platform at a later stage."

The server-based CS 1000 makes easy work of adds, moves and changes to accommodate internal personnel movement. This also delivered savings for HRI. "We have much more control over the system than before," said Vincent Liffey. "With the old digital box we had to call people in to change the mailbox, password and name settings each time there was a move. It worked out quite expensive and time consuming. BT showed us how to do it ourselves with the Nortel system and it's much more efficient."

The IP telephones are used by the HRI helpdesk which required additional equipment that BT also supplied. Nice Mirra Series 2 call recording kit and Oak Telecom reporting software were all part of the solution. The helpdesk has to handle calls from around 900 racing horse trainers who have to meet certain HRI procedures and make deadlines to be eligible to compete at races. Inevitably this involves a lot of phone calls. "If there is ever a dispute in relation to a declaration or the entry of a horse into a particularly race, we have the recording to refer back to," explained Liffey.

The Oak Telecom reporting software is used by HRI's finance department, bringing new levels of transparency to telephone costs and opportunities to explore greater efficiencies.

A BT spokesperson sums up the project: "HRI wanted a supplier that could meet the tight deadline for their move and tick the boxes around a budget that was driven by the need to reuse existing equipment." This was achieved through a combination of factors. "Any engagement is made easier because the BT approach is to allocate a single point of contact to the customer. Combined with our knowledge and experience of the Nortel hardware, the close working relationship with the account manager made it possible to deliver an end-to-end solution comfortably within the customer's timeframe."

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