

Selligent: Unlocking UC potential

**Is 'putting all your eggs in one basket' a risk?
Maybe, says Selligent, but it's worth it!**

How risky is Unified Communications? Is integrating all your communications into a single system the equivalent of putting 'all your eggs in one basket'? For Interactive Marketing/Customer Relationship Management (CRM) company Selligent, the benefits have proven to be worth the risks – and the risks can be managed. It's all a matter of proper preparation and a reliable implementation partner.



David Luyten (right), MIS Project Manager and Stephane Leyers (left), IT manager, Selligent, first presented this case at the X-change on Unified Communications, 13 January 2011

CHALLENGES

From limited to complete Unified Communications

Very often, major changes in communications systems are related to other big changes in a company's situation. This was the case for Selligent, a leader in conversion marketing and interactive CRM solutions, with offices around Europe. Its 1 November move to new headquarters in Braine l'Alleud offered an opportunity for a new communications set-up. But the company decided to go further than improving this single site. Instead, it wanted a complete Unified Communications (UC) solution for its three main offices: not only the headquarters, but also its offices in Hasselt and Paris. Its vision: one system, one provider.

"We already used a UC system, in a limited context: just IM and collaboration," explains David Luytens, MIS Project Manager, Selligent. "Our goals for the new system were straightforward: reduce costs, improve UC and enhance efficiency and manageability, for all three offices." The list of criteria was long, but after a Request for Proposal with three major suppliers, Selligent selected a solution that addressed all those conditions. To implement it, Selligent went with long-term partner Interoute.

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David Luyten, MIS Project Manager, Selligent



Selligent provides conversion marketing and interactive CRM solutions to medium and large companies. The company's headquarters are in Belgium, and it has offices in The Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy and Spain, as well as a partnership network around the world. Its 150 staff serve an international customer base across all industry sectors, including financial services, insurance, telecommunication, travel, media & publishing, retail, automotive, healthcare, manufacturing and more.

Selligent is an 'IT-minded' company: 90% of staff are IT developers or consultants, or work on the IT helpdesk.

SOLUTIONS

A complete change, covering all communications

Before, Selligent had different providers and systems in each office. Now everything had to be changed: all new infrastructure, servers, VoIP headsets, and more. The solution covers all communications, including phone, mailbox, messages, etc. "It provides us with high availability in our existing cloud system, cut our communication costs, integrates with our business environment, and is pleasant to work with." But planning and implementing; it was a real challenge. Everything had to be set up in the new headquarters site before the move. "For a while, we had both systems going: at the old site and the new. We did a lot of tests, but the real deployment went very fast – over only a few days. We were concerned about whether it would go smoothly, but we knew that once we changed over, going back was not an option!"

LESSONS LEARNT

Planning and partnership make it work

In the end, the transfer went easier than expected, says David "Our complete preparation surely had a lot to do with that. What's more, we had excellent support, suggestions and advice from Interoute." For Selligent, he insists, the many benefits of the complete UC system definitely outweigh any risks. "Everything is connected: presence, Outlook... It really improves our productivity. And there aren't really many risks, now that everything is set up."

He does note that it was a challenge to ensure the QoS, and recommends companies keep this in mind when implementing UC. And finding a suitable solution for the VoIP headsets was more complex than originally predicted. But overall, the deployment was a success: "Our users quickly adapted, the system is stable and performing, and our staff enjoy increased mobility."