

# BT Lynx people are the key as law firm embraces unified communications

“Any organisation wanting to update its infrastructure and communications should look at a unified approach, as the benefits are obvious. With a new building, you shouldn't be considering anything but unified communications.”

Dene Rowe, IT Director,  
Halliwells LLP

## Overview

### Business challenge

- Implement a powerful converged network and communications solution - an underlying infrastructure with the highest availability, resilience and performance.
- Enable high levels of efficiency for 750 partners, fee earners and administrative staff, including mobile workers; improve communications and control costs.
- Deliver the highest levels of client service.

### Benefits

- Superb availability and resilience for complete peace of mind – a robust platform underpinning all aspects of the firm's operations.
- Efficiency gains and improved client service through, for example, pushing voicemail to mobile workers' handheld devices.
- Significant cost savings, including a 10-12% reduction in calling costs.
- A massively flexible and scalable environment for continued development and user-focused enhancements.

### Solution

- Halliwells chose BT Lynx to deliver and support core ICT services - including a Cisco-based converged network, wireless-enabled active LAN infrastructure, integrated unified communications, messaging and IP Telephony.



## Case Study

With plans moving ahead for the Manchester offices of law firm Halliwells to consolidate into a new purpose-built building, the firm's IT Director saw an opportunity to rethink the organisation's infrastructure and communications. "Starting with a blank sheet meant we could work to set a new benchmark for the rest of the firm," says Dene Rowe, IT Director. "We could put state-of-the-art technology at the heart of our operations—right from the eighth-floor client suite down to cabling in the basement. We wanted it all to be a blue-chip design, to smell of quality throughout." This was a chance to incorporate new elements to drive enhanced client service, enable more effective communications and drive down costs.

Rowe says the key requirements were "high availability and resilience to a quality befitting our size, and given we'd be providing central services" - plus enhancing the usability of call features and functions, ensuring ease of use for rapid adoption and gaining a future-proofed platform: the highest quality template to apply to other offices later. "We wanted a converged network," Rowe adds. "We wanted to embrace everything on a single core network: from telephony and data communications through access control to security cameras and even vending machines." The search for a solution ultimately led to BT Lynx and Cisco technology.

### Why BT Lynx?

"We approached various providers before the full tender process, and looked at technology from Cisco and Nortel," Rowe says. "We chose BT Lynx for a number of reasons, the first one being its people—their quality shone through and we knew we could work with them. In addition,

their design provided benefits beyond what other providers were offering: it was more innovative, quality-based and up to date. Crucially, BT Lynx demonstrated it had done this before, better than the others could: delivering a converged network for a big law firm. BT Lynx was relatively near to us and could deliver all the elements we needed.

"They clearly cared about what we were trying to achieve. BT Lynx was big enough and flexible enough to meet our mid-market needs and do so with a personal touch. We decided few if any other providers could meet our requirements as effectively."

### Core to the business

Rowe continues, "BT Lynx delivered the highly resilient, highly available, unified infrastructure on which we run our business, with the solution deployed on time and within budget. In fact, we were under-budget on the overall project from an IT perspective. BT Lynx tendered for the work and came in at that price, and actually worked a little extra. There was a meeting when a partner in the firm asked BT Lynx if they'd made any compromises in the solution due to cost, and the answer was 'no'. Cost is always important, but the value delivered is far more important. With something as important as your underlying technology, you can't afford to take any chances. We'd be severely affected if the platform wasn't highly available.

"We have a unified communications platform that includes our LAN, the WAN connectivity, unified telephony, voicemail integration and a call communications platform. But it's more than that: it's the basis on which so many other functions in the business depend, whether they realise it or not: from how people get into the building to staff photocopying, the vending machines, even people getting a coffee."

### Measurable benefits

"We can definitely see measurable benefits like lower communications costs, and business advantages from approaches like integrated voicemail, which is a massive benefit to the firm," says Rowe. Mobile workers receive voicemail on their Blackberry devices, with ease of use driving rapid adoption by even the most techno-phobic. This means the firm can address client requirements far faster. Back at base, Halliwells can track call patterns and route calls across low cost providers, so reducing bills. "Overall, we've seen direct call costs reduce by between 10 and 12 percent as a result of our unified communications platform." Employees can work more efficiently, using intuitive telephony features: for instance, directories on the phone rather than dialling reception. And moves and changes that used to be problematic are now far easier, with a clear resource saving.

Future plans involve "pushing the platform further, into areas like click to dial, and integrating with our CRM system," says Rowe. "We have lots of plans around exploiting unified communications. Importantly, I have peace of mind. Since the system went live I've not worried about it working from a technical standpoint. That speaks volumes for its stability and means I can focus on more strategic work, like business process reorganisation or using IT to gain new business. We can be proactive rather than reactive in IT."

#### Customer profile

##### Industry: Law

Services: Halliwells LLP is the UK's fastest growing commercial law firm, with offices in Manchester, Liverpool, London and Sheffield. Offering a full range of services, it provides pragmatic, solution-driven advice that is designed to add value to its clients' businesses.

In late 2007 the firm's five Manchester offices relocated into a prestigious state-of-the-art building, providing a brand new hub and centralised services for the Halliwells network.

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