

Talking shop at The Bentall Centre



Facts & Figures

The Customer

- The Bentall Centre, Kingston

The Solution

- Ascotel IntelliGate 2065 telephone system
- 60 extensions
- Centralised switchboard
- Voicemail/Auto Attendant

The Benefits

- Automated customer information
- Full site communication
- Simple location of staff
- Efficient call handling

With over 80 shops, including Benthalls department store, W.H. Smith and Waterstones, The Bentall Centre in Kingston has an enormous task in keeping all stores, customers, security and management centre employees talking to each other. Completed in 1992, The Bentall Centre installed an Aastra Ascotel system, which ran successfully. However, in recent years it became apparent that there was a need for more mobile communications throughout the shopping centre and due to the increasing number of incoming calls, a more efficient switchboard system. Impressed with the level of service and quality of product, The Bentall Centre approached Aastra to upgrade its system.

Michael Spencer, Technical Services Manager at The Bentall Centre says, "We knew that Aastra would be able to offer the solution we were looking for, including mobility and a more efficient switchboard. Aastra provided excellent service including full project management and installation, training, and ongoing support with our original Ascotel system, so there was really no competition – we wanted to stay with Aastra."

Aastra recommended the latest Ascotel ISDN telephone system, as it is a very flexible solution providing a wide choice of features and system options, which can be programmed for individual use and upgraded as needed. One of the key requirements for The Bentall Centre was mobility of communications for its security and management. The Ascotel range offers the freedom that only the latest digital cordless technology can provide. The Office 130 digital cordless telephones provide a unique combination of design with

functionality that seamlessly integrates into the main system. In addition, for efficient call management, Ascotel Office features an integrated Voice Mail System, Auto Attendant and DDI (Direct Dialling Inwards).

The Bentall Centre converted their exchange lines to ISDN to optimise their line usage and reduce costs. All calls, faxes, email and internet access are routed through the Ascotel system, via the Primary Rate ISDN, improving efficiency and speed and enabling The Bentall Centre to rationalise the number of different lines connected to the site, thereby significantly reducing the overall line rental.

Mobile Communications for Staff

The Bentall Centre is a large shopping complex of 600,000 sq m, with both security and management staff roaming the area. Although on-site two way radios enabled internal communications, this method did not allow staff to make or take external

calls. So time was wasted in transferring calls as staff had to be contacted and then get to a telephone to return or make a call – leading to dissatisfaction from the caller's point of view as well as inconvenient and time consuming for the member of staff. With the new Ascotel system, mobile staff are now equipped with Ascotel Office 130 DECT handsets, which are fully integrated within the Ascotel system providing them with full system functionality, so the member of staff can make, receive and transfer external calls, wherever they are in the building. With personalised voice mail, staff can be alerted to new messages straight away and retrieve them easily for immediate action wherever they are.

Aastra Auto Attendant – Keeping Customers Happy

The Bentall Centre receives hundreds of calls a week from shoppers requiring general information such as opening times. These callers were previously routed through the receptionist, creating long waits for all callers trying to get through and the receptionist was simply repeating information. With the Aastra Auto Attendant, The Bentall Centre can have up to 39 different outgoing announcements, so the caller simply presses the relevant button on his/her telephone keypad to receive the desired information, such as the Centre's opening hours and key announcements.

In addition, the Auto Attendant system allows the caller to be connected to the department or person they require (if they have the person's extension number) without going through the receptionist, so the receptionist now only deals with calls for The Bentall Centre. This has dramatically reduced the queue waiting time for incoming callers, and taken the pressure off the receptionist.

Direct Dialling Inwards – Quick and Easy Access to the Right Person

With DDI, each member of staff has their own telephone number, including the security and roaming management employees, allowing for customers and colleagues to call the person or department they need directly or leave a message on their personal voice mail. Each member of staff can dial into their own mailbox and retrieve messages, forward messages, or the Ascotel voicemail system can send them a text message when a message has been left.

Mike Spencer at The Bentall Centre says, "We are very pleased with the new Ascotel system. It has made a real difference to our operation now all our stores, security staff and management staff can be contacted quickly and easily and incoming callers can get through to whom they need immediately, greatly increasing customer satisfaction. As expected, Aastra provided excellent service and with AIMS software, I feel assured that if we were to have a problem it would be dealt with very quickly and easily."

Mike McFadyen, Sales Manager of Aastra Telecom says, "From the original brief, which highlighted the key issues, it was apparent that by changing to ISDN, the Ascotel with integrated DECT telephony, Voice Mail and Auto Attendant would be the most appropriate solution as it provided all the key requirements and more. In addition, using AIMS (Ascotel Information Management Software) Aastra's Service Centre is able to provide The Bentall Centre with full remote system and diagnostic support, even enabling us to remotely program buttons on individual DECT handsets as and when required."

A summary of the benefits

- Mobile staff are equipped with Ascotel Office 130 DECT cordless handsets, which are fully integrated within the system, so each member of staff can receive and make external calls, wherever they are in the building.
- With personalised Voice Mail, office based and mobile staff can be alerted immediately to new messages, retrieve them from the DECT handsets and act upon them straight away.
- Aastra Auto Attendant allows callers to receive the desired information via recorded messages, rather than going through the receptionist. Callers can also be connected directly to the department they require, reducing the queue waiting time and taking pressure off the receptionist.
- ISDN and DDI allows each member of staff to have their own direct telephone number and personal voice mail, so customers and colleagues can always get in touch with the right person.
- AIMS software allows Aastra to enter the system remotely to provide support if necessary.

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