

Case study

Oakam

Oakam is a company created to provide straightforward financial and communications services in order to support the many people who feel they can't get the financial help they need elsewhere.

When the company began in business in 2006, it needed a communications strategy that was flexible and scalable, providing it with an easy growth path in line with the anticipated success of the business. As a start-up, the company knew it was extremely important to keep costs down to an absolute minimum. It was also clear that as a new business it needed to focus on customers rather than spend valuable time managing the growth of its infrastructure and the many supplier relationships that this potentially could involve.

"We needed a partner that could provide all our communications needs under one umbrella and the services had to be of a business-strength standard."

Oakam wanted to be able to benefit from advances in technology and so were looking for a communications services provider that could offer an innovative solution today and one which would also be future-proofed. Voice over internet protocol (VoIP) was the way to go and Timico was one of the VoIP service providers the company looked at. Alex Atirene explains how Oakam became attracted to Timico's business proposition:

"Timico appeared to be an excellent fit for a growing business and they turned out to be bang on for the small and medium-sized market. They were able to deliver what we needed for both our internal use and also for our customers to make telephone calls and use the internet. We now work closely with Timico to fine tune the equipment list for each new store and they help us make sure that we obtain the best value for money."

Timico was able to provide Oakam with a total solution that included hosted VoIP, private wide area networks (PWAN) and co-location hosting. Because Timico is both an Internet Service Provider (ISP) and a supplier of hosted VoIP services it was able to sort out any niggling early technical issues - that inevitably come out of the woodwork with new network installations - during the project management of Oakam's first few installations. From the start, Timico set up Oakam with a low cost PWAN that would not only allow it to securely connect the data networks of each store as the company expanded but also provide easy access to key company customer relationship management (CRM) and billing services hosted by Timico at its London Docklands data centre.

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Continued from overleaf

Timico's co-location hosting service is perfect for organisations with a critical online presence, such as Oakam. Ensuring that mission-critical data networking and associated telecommunications infrastructure is robust and reliable is fundamental in enabling companies to achieve a competitive business edge.

However, not all companies have the necessary resources or technical skills needed to provide 24/7 year-round security and monitoring. By choosing to let Timico host its network infrastructure at its data centre, Oakam freed itself from the worry of maintenance and was able to focus its resources on growing its business.

Timico's VoIP for Business service is used by Oakam personnel to call out from and between its business outlets. Because VoIP calls send voice as data through the internet and because broadband lines are always 'open', the calls that are made between Oakam's various sites are free with external calls costing less than usual rates. Timico's VoIP service is based on the AS5200 platform from world market leader Nortel, which means it is able to offer high levels of reliability. The service is hosted, which means end users do not have to have a phone

system in their premises. What are required, however, are telephone handsets and the Nortel AS5200 is based on an international telephony standard called SIP which allows the use of VoIP handsets from a wide variety of suppliers rather than locking end users into a single vendor.

After evaluating a number of options, Timico chose the Linksys SPA942 SIP phone to meet Oakam's price and quality requirements. These Linksys business handsets not only came in at a much lower price point than the competing products from conventional phone system vendors but look and feel like proper business grade telephones.

In its first year of operation Oakam proved the success of the business model and went on to open five outlets in the London area. Each new installation has successfully followed the template of the first, allowing Oakam to focus on growing its business whilst leaving the specification, installation, running and support for its communications service to Timico.

Alex Atirene
Head of IT

