



To maintain its position as market leader and to meet the demands of its increasingly sophisticated customers, Nationwide has just completed the 11th successive year of operational efficiency improvements.

These improvements are being achieved through a continuing development in products, service and technology. One such recent investment looks set to make a major impact in many different areas of Nationwide's operations.

It had become apparent that the corporate voicemail system needed updating as it was working at its maximum limit. This meant that no further employees could be provided with mailboxes on the system and neither could additional connections be made to the telephone system to carry any additional traffic. On top of this were concerns over the continued operation and support of the legacy system.

The existing voicemail system was being used to support 'internal' communication between staff at the Northampton and Swindon administrative bases and certain field-based staff. However, as with many organisations using a basic voicemail system, problems of staff 'hiding behind their voicemail' and the classic voicemail jail scenario, where responding to a voice message results in getting the voicemail of the person who sent it, were not uncommon. Since callers had very little option but to either leave a message or try again later, this was resulting in frustration and reduced staff effectiveness.

With total assets of £117bn, Nationwide is the largest building society in the world and the UK's fourth largest mortgage lender and second largest savings provider. It has a long tradition of innovation having introduced the first full-service current account paying interest, the first Visa Delta debit card and the first UK retail internet banking service. The Society has around 16,000 employees and 3,000 new members join Nationwide every day.

Initially, Nationwide planned to replace the old voicemail system with a larger, more up-to-date model with greater functionality and the capacity to handle the expected additional traffic. However, to ensure the maximum improvement, the opportunity was taken to consider the latest advances in communications technology and how best to take advantage of them.

After an initial meeting with TeleWare, the Nationwide project team identified a number of key requirements for a replacement system. Firstly, it had to be modular and scaleable in order to ensure it would satisfy the Society's current and future requirements. Secondly, as it was recognised that many of the incoming calls could be successfully handled by anyone in the same department as the person being called, the system had to give callers the option of trying another staff member before resorting to voicemail. Thirdly, the system should have the ability to support the Society's commitment to move towards more flexible work styles such as Homeworking and hot-desking. Finally, it had to integrate easily with the existing infrastructure and services.

A solution based on the TeleWare Enterprise CTI Platform® was proposed and purchased. Paul Stuart, Technology Consultant at the Nationwide's Northampton Administration Centre, said: "Having studied TeleWare's proposal and spoken to some of its existing customers, we were confident that this would provide us with the functionality and the future-proofing we needed."

The TeleWare system now provides a full complement of voicemail services to over 1600 staff and the reaction from users has been very positive. Many have commended the system for providing new communication facilities - such as totally location independent working, different message options / holiday / absence message routing - and see many positive aspects, which will benefit them in carrying out their day-to-day tasks. One such feature not previously available to Nationwide but standard within the TeleWare solution, is automatic notification of new messages. This is achieved either by setting a different dial tone on the user's telephone or, for those staff with display telephones, giving a visual indication. PC users can also be notified of the arrival of new voice messages by an email sent automatically into their Microsoft Outlook inbox.

Commenting on their choice of supplier, Arthur Amos, Head of Technology Infrastructure said: "Working with a UK-based company has allowed us not only to have an input on product development but to see the outcome of this in a matter of days or weeks rather than the many months turnaround to which we were previously accustomed."

For example, TeleWare has extended the functionality of its standard voicemail product to meet the safety requirements of Nationwide's field-based employees engaged in making home visits. By using the escalation facility Nationwide's Security Department is automatically notified if one of these staff fail to acknowledge timed messages.

More than Just a Voicemail System

There is far more to the Enterprise CTI Platform than just voicemail. TeleWare's Intelligent Telephony Services™ (ITS) complements and extends the range of call handling features and facilities provided by Nationwide's PBX to provide a more intelligent phone system. Users log-on to the system using their personal number and PIN in order to direct incoming calls to their current work location, such as an extension at the Northampton or Swindon office or any other external or mobile telephone. If the user is unavailable or busy, calls can be passed to a user's nominated alternative, such as another team or department member. Voicemail is now used only as a last resort, particularly for calls originating externally.



Hot-Desking & Home-Working

TeleWare's ITS is a key enabler of Nationwide's Changing Workstyles initiative, providing the telecommunications services necessary to support hot-desking and home-working. Such workstyles are being introduced by some departments as a means of reducing overhead costs whilst attracting and retaining employees.

Like many of TeleWare's customers, who introduced technical solutions that had an impact on their business, Nationwide decided to run a pilot scheme with a relatively small user group. This allowed the Society to assess the benefits and implications of such a move before rolling out the service to a larger user base. The pilot served around 70 employees in two groups. The first group comprised employees from the Technical Development Team at Nationwide's Head Office in Swindon who worked from home for approximately three days a week. The second saw the introduction of hot-desking for employees in one of its Business Improvement Teams. Here employees usually participate in several projects at once and the system allows them to sit with other project members at different times of the day.

The trial was deemed highly successful. Arthur Amos, comments: "Being able to receive telephone calls effectively and efficiently irrespective of current work location is crucial to the successful implementation of Changing Workstyles. The TeleWare solution provided the two business areas with the communications services necessary to support truly location independent working."

Following the successful trials and a report into the systems future usage, the system's capacity and resilience features were increased prior to a planned roll-out of services to a further 500 employees as Changing Workstyles is expanded. In view of its mission critical status, the Nationwide decided to relocate its TeleWare system from the Northampton offices to the 24 hour/day manned Swindon Technology Centre.

Being able to receive telephone calls effectively and efficiently irrespective of current work location is crucial to the successful implementation of Changing Workstyles.

www.teleware.com

Headquarters/Registered Office

TeleWare plc

TeleWare House, York Road, Thirsk,
North Yorkshire, YO7 3BX, UK

T: +44 (0) 1845 526830 F: +44 (0) 1845 522165

E: enquiry@teleware.com

Asia Pacific Regional Sales Office

TeleWare NZ Ltd

Level 8, TeRenCo Finance House, 86 Victoria Street,
Wellington, PO Box 1956, New Zealand

T/F: +64 (9) 360 6881



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE