

TeleWare Case Study



A TeleWare communications solution at the Royal Opera House has improved both customer service and internal communications.

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

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"The TeleWare system has always been highly reliable, ever since it was installed eight years ago. That said, if ever we need any help, their help desk and engineering staff provide first class support. We recently decided to upgrade to TeleWare's latest release of software in order to take advantage of some new features in the future and the migration went like clockwork."

Chris Bunce, Head of Information Technology

ROH customers naturally expect to receive a high quality performance. Similarly, they are looking for prompt, accurate information and a smooth and pain free experience when booking tickets. With over 15,000 calls per month coming into the box office, the ROH needed a solution that would deliver on this expectation.

When the box office is open there are, typically, between 10 and 20 people ready to take calls and, with some tickets costing up to £190, staff take great care not to rush people when making their bookings. Decisions on manning levels within the box office are a management challenge with the need to balance customers' expectation of excellent customer service against the need to control overhead costs.

One solution identified to assist with this challenge was to provide an automated voice system that allows callers to obtain information relevant to their enquiry in situations where they don't, necessarily, need to speak with a member of staff personally. Examples identified within the ROH include performance running times, principal ballet castings, day seats and information on standard areas such as the returns policy and support for disability access.

Background

The present day Royal Opera House reopened in 1999 following extensive redevelopment at a cost of £178 million. The venue is not only home to The Royal Opera, The Royal Ballet and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, but a national resource for the nurturing and presentation of new opera, ballet, music theatre and dance.

The Royal Opera House is, in fact, the third theatre on the Covent Garden site. Its history began in 1728 when John Rich, actor/manager at Lincoln's Inn Fields, commissioned The Beggar's Opera from John Gay. The success of the venture provided the capital for the first Theatre Royal at Covent Garden which opened in 1732. Today, well over half a million people a year attend some 293 performances on the main stage while a further 426 performances a year are given in the other spaces within the building.

Efficient Handling of Inbound Calls Delivers Enhanced Customer Service

Today, the ROH is using a carefully implemented automated call answering service from TeleWare. Callers are often able to obtain the information they require by using their telephone keypad to select from a list of spoken options. The caller then hears a pre-recorded announcement providing the information requested. Maintaining the ROH professionalism and personal approach, the option to wait to speak with one of the box office staff is always available.

This solution allows nearly 30% of the calls into the box office to be handled swiftly and efficiently, providing the precise information callers require without them having to wait till a member of staff is free to take their call. This ensures that there are sufficient staff available to assist those customers requiring a more personalised service.

Within the ROH, many calls are to enquire about the casting for a performance. Cast changes can sometimes occur at short notice. Therefore, one of the key requirements of this automated attendant service was that it must be easy and non time consuming for the information to be updated by non-technical staff.

TeleWare Implementation for ROH

A TeleWare server was installed on-site at the ROH and connected to their existing PBX (Private Branch Exchange) telephone system via a DPNSS (Digital Private Network Signalling System) link. The server was configured to handle all 30 incoming lines into the box office.

The TeleWare intelligent Auto Attendant (iAA) application was deployed to provide automated call routing using simple voice response menus. IT staff at the ROH were able to readily modify the menu structure, if needs be, to meet ongoing changes in requirements. This is currently achieved using client software on a PC within their department. One of the drivers for their recent upgrade to TeleWare's latest software release is that it allows the ROH to make use of a new browser interface for the Auto Attendant system, offering them more flexibility in system administration and saving on staff time.

Simple Updating of Announcements

The pre-recorded announcements heard after selecting a menu option can be readily updated by any authorised person using any telephone within the ROH – although this is usually carried out in a suitable 'quiet area' to avoid any unwanted background noise. No technical knowledge or special hardware is required and, in fact, the ROH use staff with trained actor's voices for that little extra appeal! No training is required, to re-record a particular announcement, the person dials a specified number to access the iAA application interface and navigates to the required announcement by responding appropriately to a series of prompts.

Maximising Use of the Platform

In addition to its primary function of providing the automated call answering service, the same ROH TeleWare installation provides voice mailboxes for around 500 ROH staff. This additional functionality utilises the same platform and application ports as the Auto Attendant system and so reduces the overall costs of the services creating a Return on Investment of under two years.

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