

snom

Case Study Gradwell

Small business communications and
connectivity providers in the UK



Section 1 - Background

The Gradwell vision is to provide UK SMEs with internet connectivity and phone services that are really useful and enhance their business. They do this by providing simple and reliable communication services and business applications to SMEs of sub-25 employees. They are the UK largest provider with their own, self-developed telephony system supported by an in-house development team. This 65 person company based in Bath was established in 1998 when Peter Gradwell as a small business user himself was unable to find the phone services he needed for his distributed web development and hosting team. He decided to develop a solution for himself and then offered his broadband based IP telephone solution with a single business number to his existing web hosting clients, growing to become a major provider of telephony in the UK and today servicing 20,000 small business users.

Section 2 – Problem

In 1998 when Gradwell was first established the use of IP Telephony was relatively new and the majority of solutions provided were from US based companies and were designed for US business use. Gradwell recognized the need in the UK for a solution that understood and addressed the unique requirements of British businesses providing local support and the ability to tailor solutions to meet the UK market. Small businesses in the UK demand a high quality and reliable telephony service with local and responsive customer support and access to someone on the phone and able to assist when needed.

Section 3 – Solution

ONI selected ITCenter's Voicis Core solution with Gradwell combined their in-house web and development expertise with Asterisk open source telephony software and a Teleswitch connecting to the BT network, building a unique and highly reliable and efficient service. It was recognised from day one that the telephone handset was a critical part of the solution. Small Business users want a telephone to look and feel like a telephone, and software based solutions were tested and found to be unreliable at that time. Determined to provide a quality business phone Gradwell evaluated the four vendors with desk phone handsets on the market and selected Snom handsets as being the most robust and delivering high quality voice. That was 11

years ago. Gradwell has continued to provide Snom handsets to their customers ever since. Peter Gradwell's selection of Snom as their desktop handset supplier of choice has not wavered. Starting with the Snom 190 hand-set and moving on to the Snom 3 series and 7 series as the product range evolved. At one time Gradwell had six vendor handsets in their portfolio but found this simple confused the customers, so today they have only two.

Section 4 - Benefits

Snom provides Gradwell with the audio quality and handset build quality they need, Peter Gradwell compares Snom to Audi – German engineering: reliable and solid and even if thrown against the wall after a heated phone conversation it just keeps on working. In addition Snom is easy to provision. Originally Gradwell did this themselves but today they have their Snom handsets provisioned prior to shipment by distributor ProVu Communications which means that Gradwell can ship directly to the customer's site. All of which shortens our delivery times and ensures we can provide a high quality service giving us happy customers and low support overheads.

Section 5 - Future

Gradwell's products have evolved over time as they continued to identify the communications services needed by their own business and then to develop and roll out these solutions to their customers. With the steady growth of the use of hosted IP Telephony they are focussed on growing their customer base and ensuring their existing customers have the best mix of products for their business needs. The Snom IP phone remains a constant in the evolving market place.

