

M&S

EST. 1884

Company: Marks & Spencer

Website: corporate.marksandspencer.com

Company Size: 84,000+ Employees

Country/Region: Global

Industry: Retail

Company Profile: Established in 1884, Marks & Spencer (M&S) is one of the UK's leading retailers specializing in high quality, own-brand food, clothing & home products offered through 1,433 stores worldwide and online. M&S employs nearly 85,000 people across 55 international territories.

Software Solutions & Deployment

Enablers:

- [Skype for Business Online](#)
- [Phone System](#)
- [Audio Conferencing](#)
- [Calling Plan](#)
- [Skype Operations Framework](#)

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Steven Collier

Lead Technical Architect, Marks & Spencer

Marks & Spencer (M&S) modernizes their telephony and conferencing infrastructure with Skype for Business Online, Phone System, and Audio Conferencing – enabling mobile work scenarios and reducing costs

“Skype for Business Online with Phone System and Audio Conferencing has been instrumental in M&S's adoption of 'Smarter Working' practices – enabling more colleagues to be engaged in the conversations that matter, reducing legacy meeting culture, and giving our colleagues flexibility on where they can work from.”

Matt Horwood

Chief Technology Officer, Marks & Spencer

M&S legacy communication and collaboration tools were increasingly out of step with modern, flexible work scenarios. Employees were connecting to conference calls from mobile devices and desk phones were going unused – leading to increasing costs. M&S moved to Skype for Business Online, Phone System, and Audio Conferencing, reducing costs and delivering an optimal toolset for an increasingly mobile workforce.

Business Need

Established in 1884 with over 84,000 employees across the globe, Marks & Spencer (M&S) is a UK based retailer specializing in high quality own-brand goods, clothing and home products. M&S saw costs for their legacy telephony and conferencing systems increasing while usage was decreasing, and they knew they needed to make a change. Driven by a desire to reduce operational costs, improve end user experience, and embrace a toolset that enabled modern, flexible work scenarios, M&S moved to Skype for Business Online with Phone System and Audio Conferencing.

Solution and Benefits

M&S modernizes communications infrastructure, enabling mobile work scenarios and reducing operational costs

With 7,000 employees working in their corporate offices, M&S found that their legacy communication and collaboration tools were out of step with the mobile-centric world of work. Phones installed on employees' desks were becoming increasingly irrelevant. Steven Collier, Lead Technical Architect, recalled, “We found that users had largely abandoned using desk phones, more frequently using their mobiles. We are seeing a rise in smarter working with employees hot desking at locations that fit the requirements of the projects they are working on, whether that be in one of our stores, with a supplier, or from our head office. Consequently, usage of desk phones was

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dramatically low, and the costs to maintain them dramatically high, relative to that usage.”

M&S was looking to drive cost reductions across the company while kicking off their “Smarter Working” initiative. “Smarter Working’ is anchored in changing the environment, the style of working, and the tools we provide our users to enable a modern mode of work.” Matt Horwood, Chief Technology Officer added, “Skype for Business Online with Phone System and Audio Conferencing has been instrumental in M&S’s adoption of ‘Smarter Working’ practices – enabling more colleagues to be engaged in the conversations that matter, reducing legacy meeting culture, and giving our colleagues flexibility on where they can work from.”

Due to their successful rollout, M&S employees are enjoying more mobile working than ever before. “User trust is building, and our M&S teams are confident they can connect and interact just as well from home as they can from the office. Not only have we reduced telephony costs significantly, but we’ve been able to reduce our allocation of office space as well which has yielded great savings,” confided Collier. “With Skype for Business Online with Phone System and Audio Conferencing, we are on track to reduce our telephony and conferencing costs by 50% over the next 5 years.”

In addition to cost savings, M&S is noting an uptick in collaboration. “Since rolling out Skype for Business Online we have doubled our usage – from 1 million minutes of telephone conferencing before our rollout, to more than 2 million minutes of Skype for Business Online meetings across the company,” shared Collier. He attributes this increase in part to the ease of scheduling meetings. “Organizing a meeting prior to Skype for Business was so painful; many would avoid doing it. We had separate systems and processes for scheduling conference bridges and meeting rooms.” He added, “Now, all we need to do is go into Outlook, select participants, check their availability, and click a button to schedule. What used to take 15 minutes, now takes less than 5. This has been a huge boost to our productivity.”

Skype Operations Framework (SOF) methodology provides thorough plan for successful deployment

The success of M&S’ rollout was a result of thoughtful planning, readiness and adoption efforts. Collier’s team leveraged the Skype Operations Framework (SOF) offered by Microsoft to shepherd the process. “SOF guided our deployment from the envision stage all the way through our deployment and end user adoption efforts,” explained Collier. “We work in retail so didn’t have our own framework to leverage. SOF provided a solid methodology and ensured we stayed aligned throughout the process.”

The M&S deployment team conducted a network assessment, and leveraged the Network Assessment Tool and Call Quality Dashboard to understand where any latency was coming from so they could address it. Additionally, Call Analytics helped them identify the root causes of any issues impacting specific users, and the Content Adoption Pack provided rich reporting on minutes and usage to yield additional insights. Noted Collier, “Because of our network assessment and readiness efforts, we know more about how our network behaves for real time voice traffic than we ever did before.”

Readiness and adoption efforts drive end user excitement and deliver quicker time to value

Once the M&S network was ready to go, Collier and team drove a readiness and adoption plan to excite end users and get them up and running with their new services. Collier said, "We had executive sponsorship for our 'Smarter Working' initiative, so our users understood that the changes coming to their telephony and conferencing services were part of a broader effort. We equipped our meeting rooms and end users with devices and headsets certified for Skype, and taught people that the right devices had a significant positive impact on call and meeting quality."

M&S had trainers walk the floor to assist employees, and once someone was up and running, they received a new Skype-optimized headset. "The delivery of the headset marked the final onboarding step, and served as a gift for participating in the rollout," explained Collier. "This helped build momentum and drive adoption. We are now getting increasing requests from teams who haven't yet migrated because they're excited to make the change."

Collier shared these words of wisdom for others deploying Skype for Business Online, "Use the Skype Operations Framework and consider all the elements from network readiness to end user adoption. A solid plan will enable you to move through your rollout more quickly and successfully, and investing in readiness and adoption will help ensure an even quicker return on your investment."

Looking to the Future

M&S is building on their initial success deploying 4,500 users with a plan to extend Skype for Business Online with Phone System and Audio Conferencing to their remaining 2,500 office employees. They are also forming ideas on how to best enable their 73,000 retail store workers with improved tools that provide flexibility and choice to further enhance the services they deliver to customers.

Reflecting on the success of their rollout to date, Collier sees how his team's work life has been impacted. "With Skype for Business Online with Phone System and Audio Conferencing we've adopted a much more mobile approach to work," he highlighted. "Many of us now work from home 1-3 days a week, and we're no longer obliged to be in one place for meetings. We have the flexibility and choice to work from anywhere, with full confidence that we're not missing anything."