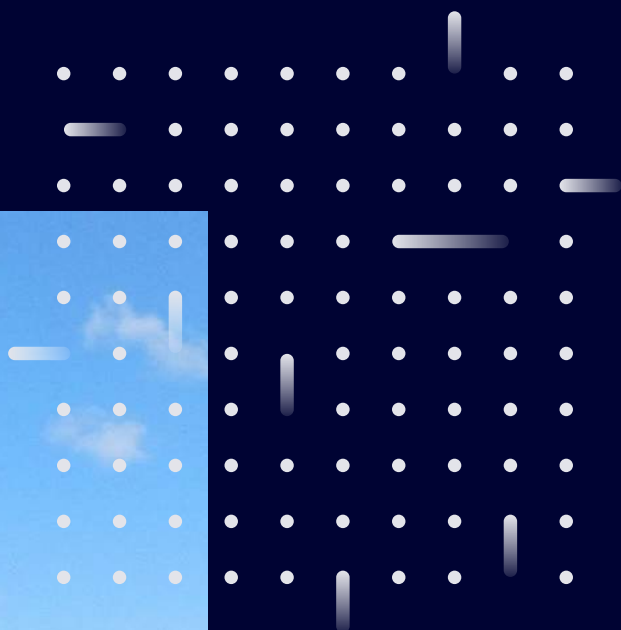


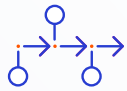
Case Study

Swansea Council

Forfusion transform Customer Care and Communications for Swansea Council



Collaboration



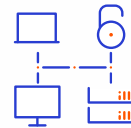
Forfusion's timeline

August 2018	----->	November 2018	----->	February 2020	----->	March 2020
01		02		03		04
Initial involvement		6 days' assessment project		Contact Centre upgrade project		COVID-19 response



Swansea Council Statistics

- 462,000 residents in the Wider Metropolitan Area
- Call centre hours of operation – 0830 – 1700 Monday - Friday
- Average of 321,000 calls handled each year
- 210 Call Agents
- 22 Contact Centre Queues and Teams
- Mitel Solidus platform and call control



Solution components deployed:

- Cisco UCS Server firmware
- Cisco Integrated Management Consoles
- VMWare ESXi Hypervisors
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unity Connection
- Cisco Unified Contact Centre Express
- Cisco Unified Border Elements

Background

The City and County of Swansea serves a population of more than 462,000 residents and 19,825 businesses with everything from Allotments to Winter Gritting, Commercial Waste to Trading Standards, Housing Benefits to Social Policy and Care. Customer call handling is clearly a vital aspect of their service, with 210 agents managing 1,235 calls daily, five days a week.

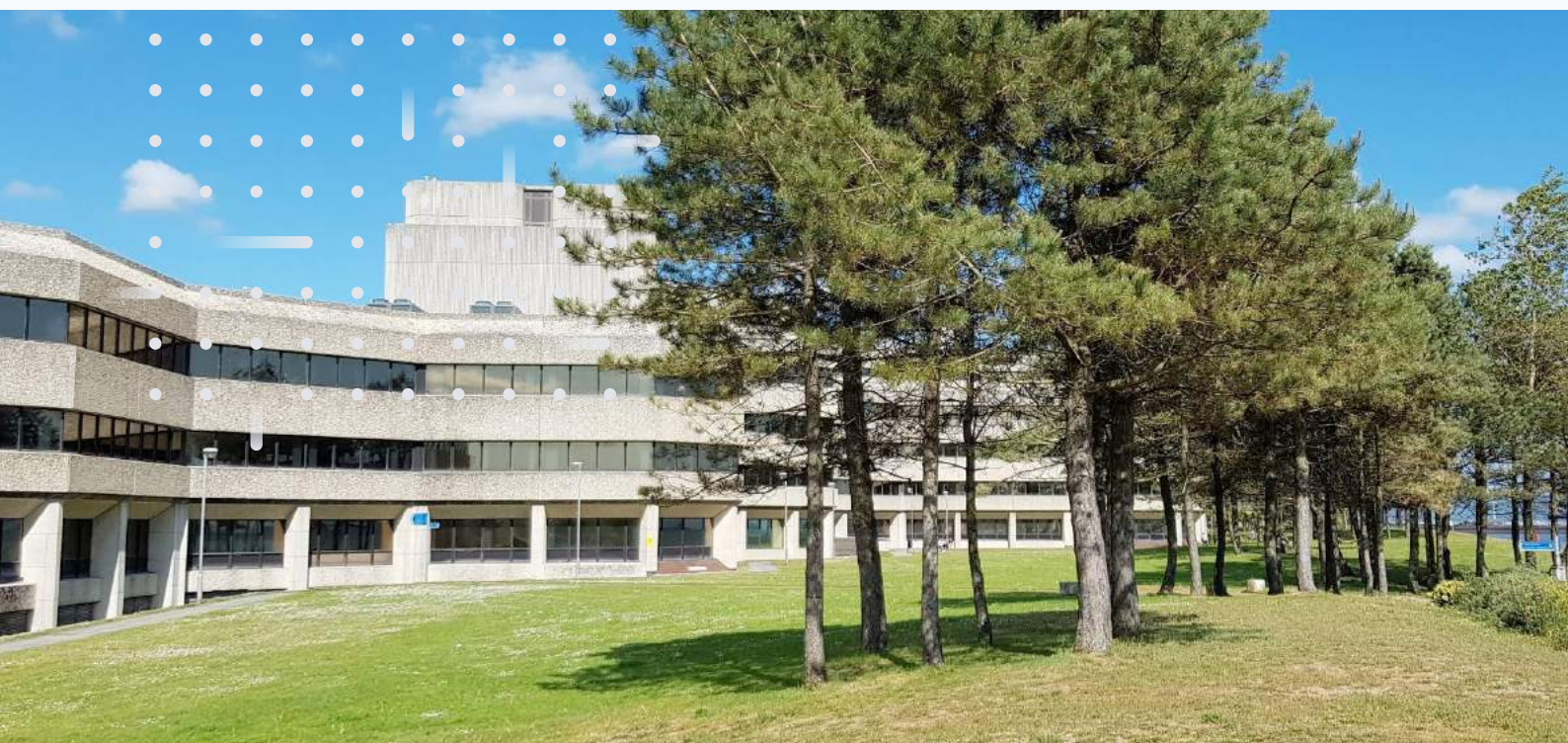
Legacy

Since 2016 Swansea Council had operated a multi-vendor communications and contact environment. This comprised core telephony from Cisco Unified Communications Manager, voice messaging from Cisco Unity Connection, a contact centre from Mitel Solidus and automatic call distribution from Netcall Liberty.

Problem

With a disparate platform, unvalidated design, aging contact centre and no single technology integrator to support them, Swansea Council was sustaining numerous issues with lost calls, agent provision and multiple daily system restarts.

This was clearly unacceptable in terms of customer care, as well as agent confidence and morale. Furthermore, the existing platform was not able to satisfy new statutory requirements for Welsh language provision.





Requirement

Swansea Council wished to improve their communication capability and meet their statutory obligations, as well as enable better mobile working, and greater collaboration through social and digital channels.

Their strategy mapped out a digital transformation in support of their key policies of safeguarding vulnerable people, improving pupil attainment, creating a vibrant and viable city centre, tackling poverty, and building sustainable communities. Stabilising customer care was an utmost priority.



The COVID effect

When the pandemic hit the Council had to accelerate their remote working strategy to accommodate a distributed workforce. All contact centre agents and critical Council business units needed access to their services over the internet from their homes and remote workspaces.

Suddenly the timescales were tightened to mitigate the risks to vulnerable residents requiring essential customer care. The Council needed a secure, robust, scalable and resilient solution.



Why Forfusion?

CEO of Forfusion Steven Forrest has been Programme Lead for Swansea Council since November 2018.

The Council had initially reached out to Forfusion over G-Cloud, the public sector procurement portal in August 2018. They were initially seeking a couple of days' worth of technical support.

"I think one of the reasons the Council chose to work with us longer term was because we actually challenged them on their initial requirement," says Steven.

"I felt very strongly that what they were asking for was an Elastoplast fix that I was reluctant to put my company's name to.

Thankfully the Council appreciated my counter-offer to do a more thorough technical assessment.

After that, we supported them through the Invitation to Tender process for their wider contact centre upgrade.

We won the contract based on our readiness to push back and make intelligent recommendations about the solution."

Solution Approach

Outlining Forfusion's usual approach Steven says: "We like to work collaboratively with our clients, and make sure we spend time getting to know their business and issues, before designing solutions that are in line with budget, strategy and future demands."

01 Assess

According to its tried and tested methodology, the first thing Forfusion did was assess the existing systems and processes in place at Swansea Council. This included auditing and meticulously documenting the environment in terms of call volumes, routing, agent deployment, call efficiency and outcomes. Steven comments: "This was an important first step to capture a snapshot of what the Council were doing, and what kind of issues were arising."

02 Design

With a clear picture of the Council's contact centre environment Forfusion could then take a vendor-validated design approach to address the Council's most pressing needs around stability and agent provision.

It was clear that the existing investment in the Cisco Unified Collaboration suite should be expanded upon, allowing for the replacement of the Mitel Solidus contact centre. The Council would then benefit from the guaranteed, single vendor solution performance of Cisco Unified Contact Centre Express.

03 Integrate

Integrating with the Cisco call control platform provided a simplified and more stable solution. The additional functionality of queue monitoring, agent call monitoring, reporting capabilities and Welsh language provision enhanced supervisor and agent performance.

This in turn helped to maximise the Return on Investment in the Cisco Unified Computing System Server environment.

Explaining the deployment process, Steven says: "There was zero downtime and operational impact in integrating the new system platform. This significantly enhances customer confidence and adoption rates."

04 Operate

When the working environment was changed by COVID-19 the Council needed to quickly scale up secure connectivity demand from remote locations. To meet the increased demand, Forfusion's single vendor approach meant that there could be an agile migration to the alternative internet connectivity solution of Cisco Expressways, replacing the limitations of Fortinet VPN.

Forfusion ensured that the call control solution was fully supported, and also enabled a transition from on-premise licensing to Cisco Smart Licensing, simultaneously mitigating operational risk and cost. Steven says: "Our relationship with Swansea Council is on-going, and we are proud to partner the Council in maintaining their new technologies and ensure their solutions continue to meet their needs as they evolve."

Outcome and Benefits

Thanks to Forfusion's support, Swansea Council are now benefitting from a secure and stable contact and communications platform that will scale and flex to their requirements.

Remote working has been enabled in a secure manner during a challenging year, ensuring 500 essential employees are able to work from anywhere. Manual system restarts have been eradicated and call efficiency has improved dramatically. There have also been several cost savings associated with licensing and a reduction in hardware requirements.

New Possibilities

The Council's new solution can support up to 7500 users, meaning there is no barrier to ad-hoc scaling and flexing as their needs change.

As remote working becomes a more likely option for many employees, the Council can be confident that the communications platform they now have in place could well enable more cost-effective decisions regarding office premises.

Partnering with a trusted and accomplished integrator is also giving the Council the confidence to fully embrace collaborative working right across the organisation. This will facilitate innovative thinking, better employee engagement and enhanced customer satisfaction into the future.



Feedback from the team regarding Forfusion's capability and approach has been fantastic. It's refreshing to work with a supplier that has the best interests of the Council at heart and appear to leave no stone un-turned when imparting advice."

Richard Jones
Network Team Leader



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