

# Avst callxpress – the communications building block at portman

[Business](#)



Established in 1846, Portman Building Society is the third oldest building society in the UK and the third largest, with assets of over ? 15 billion.

The Society serves 1. 8 million members. The Society employs nearly 2, 000 staff at the head office in Bournemouth, the administration centre in Wolverhampton and across a network of 154 branches. With over 1. 8 million members, Portman is committed to remaining mutual, so that it can continue to offer the savers and borrowers a highly competitive range of products.

Portman continue to offer the traditional branch-centred services that members expect when dealing with a building society but has also invested in, and made full use, of new technology allowing better communication and service to the members in new and innovative ways. ChallengeCustomer service continues to be a top priority for banking, investment and insurance companies. In such a competitive business sector the challenge is to attract and retain customers. With mergers and acquisitions taking place a key challenge is to ensure integration of the different types of communications systems including PBXs, Contact Centres and Voicemails. When beginning to investigate communication technology the Society asked KPMG to audit Portman's communication strategy. The report endorsed the Society's plan to implement a corporate communication solution for non-customer facing environments and to centralise faxing to avoid the maintenance of multiple fax machines and achieve central administration.

David Lincoln, Group Networks Manager at PBS was tasked with sourcing a unified communication system that would integrate with the existing communications infrastructure. An upgrade to the existing voice mail system

at the Society's Head Office was ruled out due to the unsociability of the product. After investigations into most of the leading Unified Messaging solutions AVT'S CallXpress, distributed in the UK by Avanquest, was short-listed. IntegrationDavid Lincoln states, " Key differentiators were the ability to run in a MS Mail environment initially, with a simple migration path toMicrosoftExchange, and the ability to integrate with our Lucent SDX INDeX switches.

Following demonstrations of CallXpress and consultations with Avanquest's CallXpress Product Manager, CallXpress was chosen as the preferred solution". Portman were very impressed with the functionality of the solution but were concerned that, at the time, the switch integration relied on the INDeX event port feed. David had learned of the Lucent plan to remove the event port support of the switch software, and would therefore not place an order until a digital DPNSS integration was available. The developers of CallXpress responded by quickly progressing the development of a DPNSS integration. AVST's CallXpress bridges the gap between voice and electronic messaging by tying voice processing and PBX integration into a standard e-mail infrastructure.

Designed to support the leading environments, as well as integrate with legacy systems CallXpress offers many levels of integration between existing voicemail services and e-mail inboxes. Portman had established a good business relationship with Avanquest during the implementation process and worked closely with the company on the extensive testing of the DPNSS integration with CallXpress, which also involved the developers on specific

code changes. Solution Following successful results, Portman placed an order for a 20 port CallXpress system, including 12 ports of RightFax Enterprise. CallXpress, combines voice, fax and e-mail messages in one in-box and makes them accessible via telephone, wireless device or computer. Users do not have to be in the office or logged onto a computer to access their e-mail - they can receive and respond to messages anywhere, anytime.

That means customers aren't left waiting, mobile workers are accessible, and urgent messages are available right away. This greatly increases service levels and also provides a good corporate interface to the customers."

Productivity for office based workers is also improved, displaying all voice, e-mail and fax messages together within one familiar e-mail inbox makes it easy to quickly prioritise and retrieve messages of all kinds. Employees spend less time managing messages and more time acting on them". David Lincoln remarked. By integrating with the PBX, CallXpress offers the ability to control the message-waiting indicator and provide support for standard telephone access to the user's voice inbox or can use a telephone in conjunction with an e-mail client allowing the user to send a voicemail through the e-mail client, but use the telephone to record the voice message.

Although originally it was planned that CallXpress would only be used at the Portman Building Society's Head Office, demand for a reliable communication solution for the network of 114 branches led to CallXpress being rolled out remotely using SMS to 114 branches over a 3 day period. David adds, " The end users have taken to it like a duck to water and the

training requirement was minimal, as all the users were already familiar with the Outlook Interface. First Class messaging is a must-have tool for any client facing organization and CallXpress enables our team members to respond to client inquires in an efficient manner.” Service” The installation, provided by the AVST distributor Avanquest, went smoothly and the Avanquest Helpdesk are both knowledgeable and helpful’, comments David Lincoln. When the Society moved to its new Head Office building in Richmond Hill, Bournemouth CallXpress moved with them.

“ CallXpress’s open architecture makes the product future proof,” David continues, “ As with any project there have inevitably been some unexpected issues. It’s refreshing to find a supplier who will work to resolve any issues rather than just say, “ It will probably be fixed in the next release!” I would say the combined knowledge of Avanquest and AVST together with the products strengths have made the implementation an overall success”. Portman recognises that the use of new technology has a significant role to play in its continued success and will continue building on the future with communication technology. Media Contact: Susan WoollardMpowerM: 07796 698000E:[email protected]