

Senior partners at montagu evans

[Business](#)



Montagu Evans is a property consultancy operating throughout the UK, with offices in the West End and City of London, Glasgow and Edinburgh. The partnership was established in 1921 and has maintained a reputation as a highly skilled and professional practice. This has been achieved by advising its clients on what is possible, by providing plans for what is practical and by offering high-level counsel on commercial viability and potential returns. From its traditional strengths of valuation, town planning, rating and compulsory purchase and compensation, Montagu Evans has successfully expanded into commercial agency, investment and development consultancy and is now one of the foremost firms of chartered surveyors in the country.

Nonetheless, the firm continues to emphasise a ? hands-on? approach at partner level on every case, to ensure each client receives the best possible service. Effective communications are recognised as being essential to providing that service.

Improved Call Handling

Within its West London offices, just off Piccadilly, the firm's chartered surveyors and most support staff have their own DDI (direct dial inbound) number so that clients can contact them directly without going through an operator. When staff are unable to answer personally, their calls are normally passed to their assigned secretary. An issue had been that, with each secretary handling work for up to 3-5 staff, secretaries were spending an increasing amount of time taking messages yet, in some instances, important calls from clients were not being answered within an acceptable time frame.

The solution chosen by Montagu Evans centred on the introduction of a TeleWare intelligent Office system to improve call handling and message taking. With TeleWare, each member of staff's DDI now becomes their intelligent Number and enables them to pull calls to them at their current work location. For example, if a surveyor is working temporarily from a client's office or from home they can route their calls to an alternative landline telephone or mobile phone. If the surveyor is unavailable for calls or doesn't answer within Montagu Evan's prescribed time, TeleWare's intelligent Assistant enables calls to be passed to his or her alternative contact – normally their secretary. Here again, if the alternative contact is unavailable or doesn't answer within a prescribed time, calls are passed to the personal voice mailbox of the person originally called. The inclusion of TeleWare VoiceMail (part of TeleWare's intelligent Messaging Centre) as a complement to its intelligent Number service ensures that all calls are answered promptly, even if no-one is immediately available to answer a call personally.

Giving Callers Options is Key to Success

However, as Karen Neal, Head of IT at Montagu Evans explains, “ Key to the successful deployment of a voicemail solution is giving callers options. In many cases callers are happy to leave a message, but in some instances it can be really important for them to speak with someone straightaway. The TeleWare solution gives that option.” When a call is passed to the TeleWare voicemail service, the caller hears the greeting message of the person being called. This gives them the option of breaking out to a predefined alternative

number using a single keystroke on the telephone keypad should they prefer to speak with someone else rather than leave a message.

As a part of the working culture within Montagu Evans, staff using the TeleWare system record their own greeting message on a daily basis. This alone can give some reassurance to callers that the person being called is at least available to pick up messages and not, for example, away on a fortnight's holiday! Another rule introduced by Montagu Evans' management was a limit on the number of messages staff could hold in their mailbox. This was to encourage staff to retrieve and deal with outstanding messages on a regular basis.

Tailored Out of Hours Service

In addition to the intelligent Assistant and Messaging services, the TeleWare is used to provide Auto Attendant services when the switchboard is unmanned. One of the benefits of using the TeleWare intelligent Application Builder (previously known as Visual TeleWare) is that Montagu Evans was able to easily and cost effectively tailor the way in which calls were handled to meet their particular business needs.

Integration with Novell GroupWise

Montagu Evans is an established user of GroupWise – the communication and collaboration solution from Novell – and was aware that TeleWare can integrate with GroupWise to provide a single inbox solution for voicemail, fax and email messages.

In practice, however, most staff preferred to handle email separately and so they use WebAssistant, TeleWare's browser-based application, to control all their telephony and messaging services using a graphical, screen-based interface. As well as notifying users of the arrival of new voice messages and faxes and providing access to these through a simple point and click visual interface, WebAssistant also allows users to control how their calls are handled. For example, details of incoming calls can be displayed on the user's PC screen enabling them to be handled in an informed manner.

Well Received by Users

Although Montagu Evans found it difficult to quantify the benefits of the TeleWare solution in terms of customer service and staff productivity, Karen has no doubts it has been very successful for the organisation. " The TeleWare solution has been very well received by staff and has sold itself internally.

When we first bought the TeleWare system to complement the telephony features provided by our Ericsson MD110 at the West London offices, only 4 of the 7 departments here were given access to the new services. Such was the level of user acceptance and demand from other departments that we are rolling TeleWare services out to all staff in the Head office." TeleWare's website can be viewed at <http://www.teleware.com> *For further information contact Dawn Nicholls The Message Machine Ltd T: 01895 631448 or 01895 634573 E:*