

Energy & Utility Skills

CASE STUDY

About EU Skills

Energy & Utility Skills (EU Skills) is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the gas, power, waste management and water industries, licensed by Government and working under the guidance of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES). Employer-led, their purpose is to ensure that the industries have the skills they need now and in the future.

Their prime strategic objectives have been to tackle the looming skills shortages facing the gas, power and water industries.

About RTS

Based in Birmingham and London, RTS work on a consultative and collaborative basis with business leaders and their technical teams to design and deliver Audio-Visual and IT solutions that fit their organisation's requirements exactly. Everyone at RTS is passionate about delivering technology that makes a real difference to the way people work.

From beautiful boardrooms to immersive learning environments through to next generation wireless networks, unified communications and virtual infrastructures, RTS continues to push the boundaries of what's possible with the very latest technology.

Summary

RTS provided EU Skills with a Microsoft® Lync™ solution, primarily to replace their legacy telephony systems. As a bi-product Lync has allowed them to fully utilise the benefits of unified communications, including video conferencing, as well as remote and flexible working.

For more information give us
a call on **020 7183 7222**
or visit **www.rts-tech.co.uk**

Why Microsoft Lync?

EU Skills were required to replace their legacy telephony systems, as part of a wider IT refresh across the company.

They also required a solution that enabled video conferencing, group conversations and allowed them to get their messaging out to a wider audience, all through one desktop client.

With around two-thirds of their employees working remotely, they likewise needed a solution that allowed those workers to plug into their internal systems and data.

RTS chose Lync following an assessment of EU Skills' wider business activities and requirements but also because of its seamless integration with other products and the wealth of features it had to offer.

Other solutions were considered; however Lync was the only one that met all the initial telephony requirements of EU Skills whilst presenting opportunities to save spend on external conferencing services and most importantly, travel and the reduction in their carbon footprint.

The Challenges

Whilst Lync has improved considerably compared with its predecessor Office Communication Server in terms of ease of implementation it still required an extensive business and technical skillset to implement because of its potential impact on the business.

From a business perspective, challenges centred on understanding internal procedures and fitting Lync rules and assumptions around them. Technical challenges stemmed from media gateway integration of ISDN and analogue lines.

There was also nervousness internally, as with any new technology adoption but most found Lync fairly easy to use and EU Skills also have an experienced internal IT team who quickly skilled up to support users.

The Experience

RTS initially undertook a proof of concept (POC), which they would advise other Partners to do, using one department within EU Skills to test the usability and integration with their other systems.

They found it was a natural interaction for the users and teams could feel like they were achieving more together because they were aware of what their co-workers were doing, for example through the status updates in Lync.

The POC worked so well, that one user, who was adamant they wouldn't use Lync and preferred face-to-face meetings, was completely won over and is now one of the biggest users in the company.

Lync has now been implemented across the organisation to over 80 users and has provided them with a more flexible working environment, including allowing more employees to work from home.

It has provided them with one, easy to use client for all their unified communication needs, and is now their interaction with the outside world through standard telephony (it even routes their faxes!).

It has also provided solutions to simpler issues; such as the company briefings, as users can now not only remotely access but also interact with the presenters live. It is a fantastic tool to support the wide portfolio of internal communications that are in place across EU Skills.

Another benefit to EU Skills is for conferencing, where before people had to dial in and now everything is done through the Lync client, which gives a more enriched experience to external users.

Lync has also made the need for physical handsets unnecessary, as they have nearly all been replaced by headsets, improving the well-being of employees and allowing them to type and talk.

The Business Opportunity

RTS believes that Lync is a solution that can solve various business requirements for organisations but with its array of tools, can also solve or enhance business issues the organisation were not previously aware of.

It is suitable for an organisation that has a lot of remote workers, either working from home or at other sites. Another good opportunity to introduce Lync is where an organisation is replacing their legacy telephony systems or using disparate video conferencing services, as RTS has done with EU Skills.

It is also suitable for knowledge based organisations that are required to share information in a quick and rich format.

An organisation that is already running Microsoft products, especially Exchange®, makes them a great candidate for Lync and one of the benefits over similar solutions, is that you are not charged for every feature.

RTS has also found that using Lync internally allows them to be better connected to their clients, in terms of both communication and support. In turn this has led to higher client satisfaction as well as further opportunities.

As RTS also specialise in providing Audio-Visual solutions, they have also been able to leverage that expertise and combine it with a Lync solution, to provide an enhanced experience for the clients, such as Lync-enabled meeting rooms and boardrooms with high quality speakers as well as in-table and in-ceiling microphones.

Deployed in the right environment RTS believes that with the right education on the uses of Lync, it could benefit an organisation way beyond their immediate needs.

The Benefits to EU Skills

- EASIER ACCESS FOR REMOTE WORKERS
- BUDGET SAVINGS REGARDING LESS NEED FOR TRAVEL
- MORE FLEXIBLE WORKING ENVIRONMENT
- COLLABORATIVE WORKING ON DOCUMENTS THROUGH THE SHARE FEATURE
- MORE STREAMLINED COMMUNICATIONS
- VIDEO CONFERENCING, ALLOWING KEY MEMBERS OF STAFF TO BROADCAST ACROSS THE ORGANISATION
- INTEGRATED TELEPHONY SYSTEM
- ABILITY TO RETIRE LEGACY APPLICATIONS TO SAVE COSTS
- NO LONGER NEED TO PAY SUPPORT ON TELEPHONE SYSTEMS
- GREATER COLLABORATION ACROSS EMPLOYEES
- PHYSICAL HANDSETS NO LONGER NEEDED
- THE ABILITY TO HAVE GROUP CONVERSATIONS.

"I was really pleased with the professional way that RTS has approached this project and their ability to deliver both phases of the project on-time and to budget.

Lync has certainly made a big difference to the whole of our organisation, which can be seen not only in the way employees now work, their reduced travel time and our reduced travel expenditure, as well as the reducing our carbon footprint.

RTS has provided us with a unified solution that has given our organisation far greater capabilities and flexibility than a standard telephone system replacement ever could.

The benefits to EU Skills have been immense, in terms of our productivity and connectivity to our workers. I would recommend Lync to any organisation and also RTS as a go-to Partner, in order to implement it."

TIM BALCON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
ENERGY & UTILITY SKILLS