

FirstAssist selects Azzurri and Avaya for a £2 million multi-site IP contact centre experience

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Contact centres implement Avaya IP Telephony to improve customer service and agent productivity

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Newbury and Guildford, UK – Avaya, Inc (NYSE: AV), a leading global provider of business communications software, systems and services, today announced that FirstAssist, provider of health and well-being solutions in the UK, has implemented a new Avaya Internet Protocol (IP) based contact centre solution across all its sites. Azzurri Communications, a leading communications and technology company and Avaya Platinum Partner, was responsible for delivering the project, worth £2m including a five year maintenance contract. The new solution will enable FirstAssist to share call traffic between its six contact centres, improving customer service and agent productivity.

FirstAssist is a new generation health and well-being provider, delivering advice, care and insurance solutions to both individuals and businesses. It was formed in April 2003 following a management buy-out from Royal & Sun Alliance (R&SA). The need to obtain technical independence from R&SA drove FirstAssist to review its existing technology systems. The company decided to standardise on the Avaya telephony because of its more modern infrastructure, richer functionality and lower overall cost.

By standardising FirstAssist on the Avaya™ Communication Manager IP telephony platform, Azzurri and Avaya have helped to lay the foundations for the company's future converged communications strategy due to the scalability of the product. IP telephony is software-based technology that uses Voice over the Internet Protocol (VoIP) to transmit voice as data over a computer network.

Customer service levels will be improved through the ability to route calls to free agents at any one of the company's six contact centres across the UK, which previously operated completely independently of each other. During peak periods, Avaya skills-based routing software, in conjunction with IP telephony, will enable overflow calls to be intelligently routed across FirstAssist's converged communications network to the best-skilled agent, at no extra cost to the customer or FirstAssist and irrespective of the agent's location. The aim of this is to increase customer service by sharing pools of resource in order to meet peaks in demand.

Mitch Lambton, IT director at FirstAssist, comments: "The combination of Avaya's rich IP technology, with Azzurri's deep understanding of our requirements and business goals, means that we have a solution in place that clearly meets all our needs. It was the overall package offered by Azzurri and Avaya that impressed us. The fact that we can now improve our customer service levels is of immense benefit to us as a growing organisation and helps to ensure that we have a better chance of retaining existing customers and winning new ones."

FirstAssist selected Azzurri based on the functionality of the Avaya solution it offered and the

responsiveness of the Azzurri team. "We always felt confident that Azzurri would deliver on its promises and look after us at every stage of the project. The team made us feel like we were important to them, which reassured us that service levels would not drop once the deal had been done. Azzurri's delivery and service has been first rate and the Avaya Communication Manager is a major technical leap forward for us, moving us on to IP communications and into the 21st Century," continues Lambton.

Azzurri acts as a single point of contact for FirstAssist on all communication systems related issues, ensuring any problems or issues are dealt with in a consistent manner. FirstAssist is now looking to extend its partnership with Azzurri by consulting with the company on a number of other telecoms projects.

"Contact centres are under increased scrutiny when it comes to customer service and the ability to cope with peaks and troughs in demand is more a necessity rather than a 'nice to have' today," says Martin St. Quinton, chief executive officer at Azzurri. "By future-proofing itself now, FirstAssist is preventing the need to make substantial financial outlays on technology as developments are made in the future. The Azzurri/Avaya relationship continues to provide our customers with a strong, professional, cost-effective, IP telephony solution."

Clive Sawkins, vice-president for Avaya in the UK and Ireland comments; "An IP telephony backbone creates a much more flexible telecommunications environment for contact centres, and can help to reduce costs, lower risk and grow revenue. Routing between the different contact centres needs to be a seamless experience for the customer to ensure a transparent service is provided – this is exactly what FirstAssist is achieving through its investment. FirstAssist is ensuring that more calls can be handled at peak times, making sure it is always on hand to answer customer queries."

FirstAssist is using Avaya Communication Manager Elite Call Center and CMS reporting applications.

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About Azzurri Communications

Azzurri Communications was formed in June 2000 with support from 3i and the Bank of Scotland and is currently made up of eleven strategic company acquisitions. Azzurri Communications is one of the largest and leading telecoms resellers in the UK. Annual turnover stands at £70 million. There are 500 employees nation-wide. Headquartered in Newbury, Azzurri currently has sales and support operations in

Fareham, Egham, London, Kingston, Birmingham, Manchester, Burnley, Leeds and East Kilbride.

Since 1st July 2003, all of the eleven businesses have integrated under the Azzurri Communications brand.

Backed by leading manufacturers and networks, Azzurri provides solutions that include Voice, Data, Consultancy, Networking, Digital Print and Mobile. Azzurri also provides consultancy such as in-depth communications audits for large corporations and comprehensive telecoms management services. For further information visit www.azzurricommunications.com

About Avaya

Avaya Inc. designs, builds and manages communications networks for more than 1 million businesses worldwide, including over 90 percent of the FORTUNE 500®. Focused on businesses large to small, Avaya is a world leader in secure and reliable Internet Protocol (IP) telephony systems and communications software applications and services. Driving the convergence of voice and data communications with business applications – and distinguished by comprehensive worldwide services – Avaya helps customers leverage existing and new networks to achieve superior business results. For more information visit the Avaya website: <http://www.avaya.com>