

CUSTOMER
BRIEF

Gloucester Rugby



Gloucester Rugby (GR), located in the southwest region of England, was founded in 1873 and today is one of the leading names in world rugby. In 1995, the club was one of the founding members of The Premiership, when rugby first turned professional in England. GR play roughly 20 games at Kingsholm stadium, which with the new 7400 stands now has the capacity of over 16500, making it the second largest club rugby union ground in the country. The league's season features home games every other week from September through to May. During the 2006 season, nine out of 14 home games at Kingsholm were sold out, with an average attendance of 12,600. Today, GR has 7,000 loyal and committed season ticket holders, and is one of the largest attended, regular sporting attraction in the region. Thirty people are on the business staff at Kingsholm for club and stadium operations, and GR also operates Hartpury training ground located approximately five miles from the stadium. For more information, visit: www.gloucesterrugby.co.uk.



Challenge

For many years, part of the club's tradition included relying on the support of volunteers to run the club's day-to-day operations, which included maintaining the telephone system at Kingsholm stadium. The club's legacy Meridian Northstar system – with eight analog lines and between 15 and 20 extensions located around the stadium – was actually installed by a long-time fan. But once the team turned professional and joined the Premiership, it gradually became apparent that the Meridian system was unable to keep up with fans' calls for ticket information and match updates, not to mention the more pressing communication needs of the coaching staff and players.

Crowds at the stadium doubled in size for the rugby matches, and the venue began hosting various other large sporting events and related activities seven days a week instead of only on the weekends.

The GR knew that Kingsholm and Hartpury needed a state-of-the-art and flexible telephony solution to meet the growing demands that come with being the site of a professional and fan-friendly organization. Providing better telephone service in its conference rooms and hospitality boxes at Kingsholm also became more of a priority. The club also wanted to establish a connection between Kingsholm and Hartpury for three-digit dialing between the locations, and easy transferring of calls from one to the other.

Solution

GR deployed an IP Telephony solution to improve the clubs internal and external communications at Kingsholm stadium and Hartpury training grounds. Avaya BusinessPartner Lister Communications managed the installation. The new integrated telephony deploys Avaya IP Office at the main site in the Kingsholm ground and Avaya IP Office – Small

“It was fundamental for us to be able to address the increased levels of calls both internally and externally. Avaya's new IP Telephony solution has enabled us to improve communication between our staff at all levels, whether in the playing department or answering match day tickets and other media enquiries – all by using an all 'in one' converged IP enabled solution.”

— Perry Perrott, IT consultant, Gloucester Rugby



Office Edition at the training ground in Hartpury. The two systems allow better link-up between on-field coaches and the club's head office, and provide all staff with the tools to maintain a consistent, high quality service when handling match day calls and enquires.

A high-speed Wide Area Network supporting IP telephony links the club's main site at Kingsholm Stadium to the training site in Hartpury. Club staff members are using Avaya IP DECT (Digital Enhanced Cordless Telephone). The complete solution features highly resilient network architecture, ensuring service continuity in the event of a failure or fault. The club has also been using Avaya's IP Softphone making it easy for staff to place and receive phone calls from their laptops — an ideal application for the club's employees on the move. GRC staff members also rely on Avaya VoiceMail Pro for all of their messaging needs, and the IT staff uses Avaya PhoneManager Pro to configure call flows and staff the club's phone lines to handle fan inquiries.

Applications and Services

- Avaya IP Office 406
- Avaya IP Office – Small Office Edition
- Avaya IP DECT (Digital Enhanced Cordless Phones)
- Avaya VoiceMail Pro
- Avaya PhoneManager Pro
- Avaya IP Softphone
- Avaya Authorized BusinessPartner — Lister Communications

Results

- **Maintaining round-the-clock, seven days a week communications.** The new IP telephony network, based on Avaya's IP Office converged voice and data solution, has enabled Gloucester Rugby Club to transform itself into a seven day a week business. The investment in IP Telephony was made as part of Gloucester Rugby's plans to upgrade its communications system to address the evolving needs of a professional organisation that has to be in touch with players, coaches and management at all times.
- **More responsive staff.** With Avaya IP DECT phones, tracking down a member of the stadium operations staff or the grounds keeping crew, no matter where they are inside the stadium, is a simple process. Being able to essentially carry their office line with them everywhere on the grounds has allowed the club's staff to be much more productive during the work day and avoid missing important phone calls.
- **Ease of communications between two club locations.** By networking Kingsholm and Hartpury on one IP Telephony Solution, the club's operating staff, coaches and players now enjoy dramatically improved communications between the two club locations, which has also fostered a greater sense of team spirit and cooperation.
- **Better communications with fans.** Programming the Avaya Auto Attendant to answer incoming calls has allowed the club to provide more efficient service to fans and offer the latest match information. One example of how this works occurred prior to a match against the Newcastle Falcons on December 22, 2006. With fog rolling in as thick as pea soup across Kingsholm Stadium for three days prior to the match, game officials were unsure right up until the opening kickoff whether or not the conditions were suitable for the match. On an hourly basis, club officials used Avaya Auto Attendant to continually update the information fans received when calling for an update on the weather conditions. The decision to postpone the match was relayed to fans with a message on the Auto Attendant along with a "hotline" number published over TV and radio to get match information out to public.

For more information on how Avaya Intelligent Communications can take your enterprise from where it is to where it needs to be, contact your Avaya Client Executive or Authorized Avaya BusinessPartner, or access other collateral by clicking on **Resource Type** under **"Do Your Research"** at www.avaya.com.

“ Rugby is an international industry, and clubs face the same pressures as any business. Having a fully supported, integrated telecommunications system, such as the solution delivered by Avaya was imperative to meeting the needs of our staff, fans and sponsors. ”

— Perry Perrott, IT consultant, Gloucester Rugby