

# National Geographic tunes into Aastra



## Facts & Figures

### The Customer

- National Geographic

### The Solution

- Aastra IntelliGate (model 2065) Telephone System
- 130 phone extensions
- 8 port Voicemail
- Direct Dial Extensions

### The Benefits

- Centralised telephone system providing improved communications across different Business Units
- Improved call handling & customer service levels
- Networked extensions and free 'internal' calls significantly decreased call costs
- Voicemail provides a highly flexible messaging service

**Moving to new premises seemed an ideal opportunity to improve communications within several units of the UK Sky/News International operation. National Geographic Channels, National Geographic Television International, National Geographic Magazine and Fox International Channels UK were housed together in Shepherds Bush. Each wanted to keep their own separate identity and had its own individual requirements, but they also had a shared focus and a need for streamlined, complementary administration processes and systems.**

**Combining communications functions is a large undertaking so National Geographic sought and appointed a telecommunications systems consultant to resolve the issues and advise on appropriate suppliers.**

**After a tender process Aastra Telecom emerged as the best-placed contender, offering solutions rather than limitations and proposing a flexible integrated system based on the proven IntelliGate technology.**

### The Requirement

Combining several Business Units under one roof, each wanting to retain their individuality, but with a need for shared administrative telephony functions and no clear view of future requirements, required a system offering flexibility and future-proofing of the highest order. The system had to allow each to retain their own identity and work independently, whilst also providing effective and seamless communications across functions. The ability to share administrative processes effectively was paramount to the success of the one-site merging operation.

As in any similar merging exercise, cost was an important factor and the ability of the system to deliver

flexibility and efficiency, within clearly defined cost saving parameters was essential. In addition, given the different but allied media within which each of the separate Channels and other businesses all worked, the system had to offer effective future-proofing, to ensure that each could move forward independently as necessary, but also together where appropriate.

Simple things like staff in different areas being able to make calls seamlessly between different business units was essential if the merger was to provide the desired cohesion. 'Internal' calls had to be cost-effective as there was an increased likelihood of traffic between them.

### Marketing Manager for Aastra, Bev Martin, explains:

"The IntelliGate 2065 model provides an ideal and highly cost effective solution in this situation. These are reasonably common integration issues but nevertheless they are exactly the ones that the IntelliGate

phone system is designed to overcome. Using the Aastra IntelliGate Telephone System as a cross-unit administrative solution, now provides National Geographic with a centralised communications system, that offers far more efficient customer service, together with a significant reduction in call costs."

### The Solution

Aastra Telecom installed an Aastra IntelliGate system with 130 Office 25 handsets and 8 port voicemail at the Shepherds Bush offices. All staff were given DDI, enabling direct incoming calls to individuals, whilst the main office switchboard number was handled by a number of designated individuals.

### Improved Customer Service

External callers can ring directly through to their chosen contact, whilst general calls to the Business Unit are handled centrally through the existing main office numbers. Once a call is taken the caller can still be transferred to any other extension within the network, i.e. within the same Business Unit, or between Business Units.

### Reduced call costs

All extensions are now part of the same telephone system in the same office, thereby improving call handling and significantly improving customer service levels. Call costs between Business Units have significantly dropped, as these calls are now over their own network and free of charge. System administration is now totally centralised.

### Message management with Voicemail

The voicemail can now provide centralised cover for all system extensions and all messages can be picked up either from their telephone or remotely, via a mobile phone for example. This has proven extremely useful for when staff are out of the office, allowing them to pick up messages using remote access, enabling them to handle queries when away from the office.

**Stephanie Holm, Head of Operations, National Geographic Channels Europe, says of the Aastra IntelliGate solution:** "The new phone system has made the merger of several Business Units possible, and has significantly improved our communications, as we can now handle calls so much more efficiently. By installing the IntelliGate system we've shown that this technology can prove beneficial to companies of all sizes not just large corporates. Free phone calls between Business Units and widespread voicemail are just the start."

### A summary of the benefits:

- All calls are handled quickly and efficiently, with callers able to access individuals directly, on their own number through DDI
- Free phone calls between all system extensions, across all Business Units
- Voicemail provides an efficient remote access messaging service for any staff who are out or otherwise unavailable
- Call costs have been reduced significantly due to reduced number of call backs
- All system extensions share the same high level of functionality including access to all customer speed dials

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