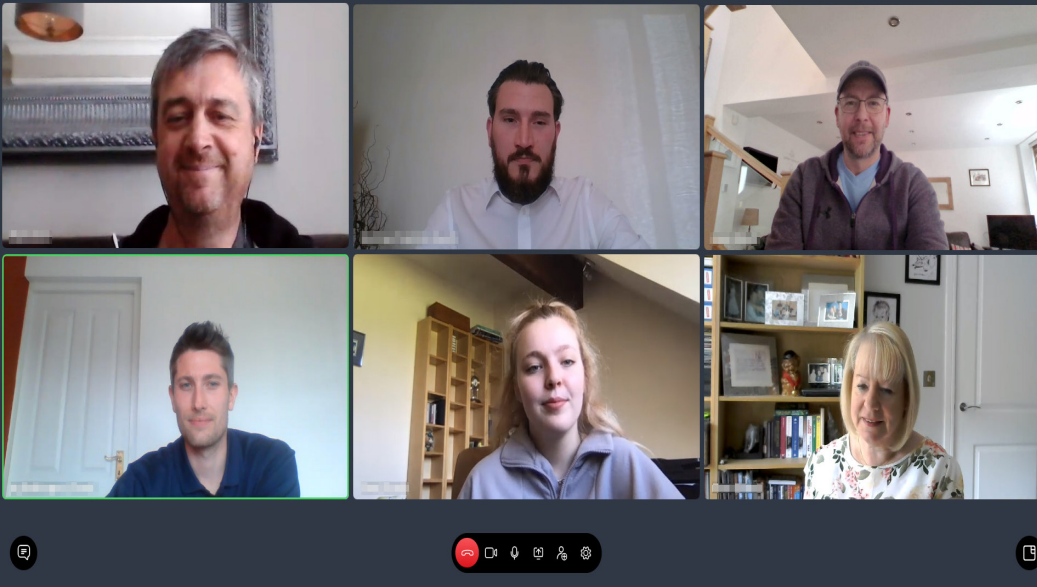


Case Study

Incom-CNS Group

COVID-19: Rapid remote working response



At a glance

- Swift implementation
- Resilient virtual network
- Optimised efficiency
- Preserved user functionality
- Integration with third party applications
- Streamlined Collaboration
- Easy-to-use Unified Communications
- Mobility and web conferencing
- Maintained call handling and routing
- Accurate management information
- Upheld Customer Service levels

Incom-CNS implements emergency business continuity plan early on in Coronavirus crisis to enable remote working for office-based team utilising existing Mitel MiVoice for Business Unified Communications platform with MiCollab and MiTeam Meetings

The Incom-CNS Group is an award-winning business communications solutions provider with over 2,000 customers across the UK. Founded in 1989, the group has grown both organically and through acquisition to reach £11m turnover and employ an 80 strong team. With head office in Manchester housing the majority of the Service, Provisioning, Account Management, Finance, IT and Technical teams, the group also has regional offices for engineering team members across the country.

Swift action

As Coronavirus became a global pandemic and the outbreak intensified in the UK in early March 2020, a timely meeting of the Incom-CNS board of directors led to an early decision to

implement a remote working plan for the large majority of the head office team, a week before the UK government issued recommendations for 'home working, wherever possible'. The aim of the board was to protect the Incom-CNS team, as much as possible, and allow them to continue to deliver support to customers during a time when there was likely to be an increased number of enquiries and demand for a move to similar remote working solutions.

The proposed timescale to migrate the Incom-CNS teams from head office to home working, was just four days.

Ready to rollout

Incom-CNS is an industry leader in taking businesses on the Digital Transformation journey and was an



"We promptly adapted our way of working so that this crisis had as negligible an impact on our business operations as possible, meaning we felt confident we could keep our team safe and continue to support our customers for the duration of the outbreak in the UK."

Jason Kilvert

Incom-CNS Group CTO

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early adopter of Cloud technologies. The company was operating a hybrid Cloud solution, with many of the team already fully enabled to work remotely and connecting to both network and Cloud based systems to fulfil their daily roles. The rollout to enable remote working for the whole team was largely a matter of purchasing additional licences and ensuring that everyone had the appropriate permissions to access the systems they were using within the office, from their home location. The IT team enabled users to safely log on to a combination of on-premise and Cloud based software for Service Desk, CRM, billing platform and administration systems, using encryption and two factor authentication, via VPN.

Unified Communications

Incom-CNS utilises a Mitel MiVoice for Business Unified Communications platform with MiCollab integration. All users were connected to MiVoice Business via a secure network connection allowing the team to access to the same 'in-office' communications experience from home. Incoming calls on the main business numbers continued to be answered via auto-attendant and distributed to the relevant departments and team members accordingly, with management information visible on remote wallboards for relevant personnel.

Team members who were using desk phones within the office were set up at home with IP handsets and logged in with their usual extension number via Mitel's Teleworker feature, which enables users to connect to the Mitel system using an encrypted, secure connection so they can use all of their usual telephony services, remotely.

Many of the office-based team worked from laptops with MiCollab software already installed, so their transition to remote voice communications was particularly straightforward. MiCollab allows you to control your telephony from your desktop, whether dialling out, answering calls or controlling where a call is going, ie. to a mobile device. It also provides presence, instant messaging and collaboration tools

such as audio conferencing, screen sharing and one-to-one video. MiCollab software can be run on a PC or Mac, IOS or Android device, so smartphone or tablet users also have access to all telephony features.

Collaboration

Prior to the Coronavirus crisis, different groups of Incom-CNS personnel would regularly come together in the office for departmental meetings, product training, presentations and to discuss projects etc. Office based meetings would often involve one or more 'out of office' team members joining via MiCollab audio conference bridge or by video conference, using Microsoft Teams. However, the benefits of such collaboration tools became particularly apparent once the workforce had been dispersed due to the pandemic. In light of the global spread of Coronavirus, Mitel had expedited the launch of MiTeam Meetings, an innovative, Cloud based collaboration platform. MiTeam Meetings allows team members to transition between chat, voice and video seamlessly in a single Cloud application; share and store documents within the meeting stream and keep track of important discussions with persistent chat logs, to return to at the next scheduled meeting.

In this way, the Incom-CNS group were able to conduct meetings, progress projects and connect with customers to provide updates and support, but these tools also enabled them to maintain regular face-to-face contact with colleagues, which was vital during this period of isolation which meant some members of the workforce spending long hours alone.

Strong team and leadership

As a telecommunications provider, Incom-CNS fell within the 'Utilities, communication and financial services section', as defined by the UK government during the COVID-19 pandemic and, as such, many of their team were defined as 'key workers'. While the majority of personnel were able to carry out their roles from home, the company gives due respect to the members of their engineering and technical teams who were required

onsite to support customers, especially within front line public services like hospitals, care homes & health centres.

Strong leadership and consistent communication from a trusted source are crucial elements during a crisis. Incom-CNS had a comprehensive Business Continuity Plan in place and company directors aligned the wider workforce from day one. The remote working plan was fully effective, with all users appropriately trained and operational, prior to government recommendations around home working. From the early days of national uncertainty, the board regularly advised the team of the company plans and updated them throughout the crisis. The physical and mental wellbeing of the team was considered throughout, with remote access to a trained counsellor put in place to help personnel to cope with the challenges of the situation.

The prompt actions of Incom-CNS enabled them to protect their own team from infection, as much as possible, offer continuity of service to customers, and placed them in the best possible position to help their customers implement remote working for their own businesses, in line with government advice.

"Never had it been so important to help businesses connect and to enable effective remote working, to keep our customers operational throughout this challenging period."

Jason Kilvert

Incom-CNS Group CTO

Get in touch to discuss your business communications requirements

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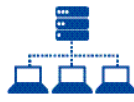
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