



CASE STUDY

Rapid Response

Cloud Telephony Deployed
in 2 Weeks

When a top UK university's phone and contact centre system failed just before its busiest period, Maintel quickly stepped in. Leveraging our technology partners, we delivered a cost-effective cloud solution within two weeks, ensuring the university handled the surge in calls smoothly.



At a **glance**

The issue

It couldn't have come at a worse time. Less than a month before A Level results day, a major cyber incident at a leading UK university's meant its IP phone system and contact centre were suddenly rendered unusable. That risked the university being unable to take calls at its busiest time of the year: Clearing.

The project

The university turned to long-term telephony partner Maintel for a solution. Maintel recommended setting up a highly flexible Gamma Horizon solution, including Horizon Contact, to restore communications at speed for the 500 back-office users and 110 contact centre agents.

The outcome

Within a week of the university signing the 90-day contract, this had been installed - in ample time for Clearing. Users found the softphones easy to work with and were comfortably able to handle the influx of calls. The fact that the telephony issues had been resolved so promptly also allowed the university's ICT team to focus on addressing the problems in the wider infrastructure.

Their **Background**

For UK universities, Clearing is a pivotal time. This short window after A Level results day is comfortably the busiest period in terms of incoming calls. More than 50,000 students find university places through the process, which matches those who didn't get the grades for their first-choice university with other institutions, as well as helping students who exceeded expectations to secure places at a higher-ranked university. From the university perspective, it's an opportunity to fill courses with motivated applicants, at speed.

With so many complex enquiries, from stressed young people, in a short space of time, Clearing success depends on voice communications. Maintel's client, a respected university in London, typically sees its call volumes soar for these few days in August from a couple of hundred to thousands - making it the single busiest and most demanding period for its IP phone system.

The Challenge

In summer 2024, the university faced a crisis. So when a cyber incident struck at this sensitive time, it meant that its trusted IP phone system and contact centre were rendered unusable, just three weeks before Clearing was due to begin. It needed to find an alternative means of managing the calls, urgently, or risk missing out on students and leaving courses under-populated.

Why Maintel?

Maintel has supported the university's IP telephony system for almost a decade, though it has no involvement in the underlying network. So it was a logical step for the university team to ask Maintel if it could think of any possible solution, that could be delivered at sufficient speed to allow it to participate in Clearing as normal.

With ample experience of supporting universities through Clearing – including having teams on site at institutions during the peak period to address issues as they occur – Maintel knew exactly the severity of the situation. Maintel also understood the university's culture and technology environment, meaning it could make practical proposals and pre-empt potential barriers to rapid deployment.

The Solution

The Maintel team recommended a solution built on the Gamma Horizon portfolio. Designed for SMBs, the Gamma Horizon suite offers a highly usable and feature-rich telephony solution, including Horizon Contact, its Contact Centre as a Service (CCaaS) element. It was the most suitable option for this situation for two key reasons: it can be deployed extremely quickly and, unlike with many cloud offerings, there are options for short-term contracts.

In this instance, Maintel advised a 90-day licence, which would cover not only Clearing but also the start of the new academic year (another peak call period). It would also give the university's ICT team time and space to solve the wider issues and bring the existing telephony solution back into action.

The contract was quickly signed and Maintel's pre-sales team and expert engineers were involved in ensuring a rapid deployment. Processes were streamlined for tasks such as testing and acceptance, to accelerate readiness.

What are the benefits?

Within a week of the ink drying, the Gamma Horizon solution was in place, supporting the university's 500 back-office users and the 110 contact centre advisors – some temporary recruits – that would be working through Clearing. All users had intuitive softphones, removing the need for hardware configuration, and were able to familiarise themselves with the technology before the lines opened.

With that concern addressed, the university's ICT team were able to focus on restoring the network, so that by the time the Gamma Horizon licence expired, the old phone system was fully functional again.

The Future

The experience of using Gamma Horizon proved a highly effective one and the university could consider short-term licences for Horizon Contact to support Clearing in future years.

Maintel will continue to support the university's telephony and ensure it offers the best experience for staff and students.



When the expected influx of calls came during clearing, the university was ready. Over the peak period, there were no technical issues and dozens of students were matched to available places. The Chief Technology Officer reflected “The phone system performed better than I could possibly have hoped for.”



Solid Solutions for a Dynamic World

Maintel is a communications managed services provider. We empower our clients across the public and private sector to deliver mission critical services and achieve their workplace, service and customer experience goals.

We consult on the design, deploy and manage network infrastructures, platforms and software, including our own, that keep ongoing operations running smoothly and dependably, protecting business as usual, at the same time being flexible enough to adapt.

When customer, employee, the general public and regulatory expectations are ever-changing, choose Maintel. We provide progressive, solid solutions that help you succeed in a demanding, dynamic world.

Our Services

We provide solutions that are not only robust but also adaptable and responsive to the ever-changing nature of the world around us.

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