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## Reduced costs, improved communications and increased security for UK's largest childcare provider



### The Customer

Founded in 1983 by three families who were struggling to find quality childcare, Busy Bees has grown to become the largest pre-school childcare provider in the UK with over 360 nurseries nationwide, employing over 9000 staff, caring for and teaching over 35,000 children.

MPS has been working with the customer since 2003 when it installed a number of small Panasonic telephone systems in Busy Bees nurseries. The Busy Bees Group was impressed and

consequently commissioned MPS to provide voice and data cabling infrastructure and a Panasonic KX-TDA200 telephone system when the first National Support Centre opened in 2004.

From a base of fewer than 30 nurseries in 2004, Busy Bees had big growth plans. This posed risks for the Busy Bees IT team around management, control, support and security of voice and data systems and networks, control of Internet content, providing staff with IT and communications support,

### The Impact

- Reduced communications costs
- Improved cost control and reporting
- More efficient integration of new acquisitions
- Increased security
- Enhanced teaching and learning
- Streamlined supplier management

**“By identifying the services being used, eliminating duplication and providing more competitive tariffs, MPS typically reduce our billing at each site by 60%. ”**



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identifying, controlling and reporting costs to the business. The IT team knew they would need support from a communications partner capable of designing, delivering and supporting solutions for Busy Bees voice and data networking requirements as the business developed. MPS was given the opportunity to deliver against this remit and quickly took control of all aspects required.

The majority of growth has been through a series of acquisitions resulting in Busy Bees taking over nurseries with communications services from a number of different providers. Services and costs had to be rationalised and duplication eliminated or the future growth of the business would be compromised. Migration of services to MPS resulted in a consistent level of service and support whilst costs were reduced through rationalisation as well as the benefit of MPS rates. Billing is bespoke, transparent and clear across all Group Companies.

Paul Creaser, Busy Bees Head of IT since 2010 said, “Following acquisitions, by identifying the services being used, eliminating duplication and providing more competitive tariffs, MPS typically reduced our billing at each site by 60%.”



Paul Creaser, Head of IT

## Challenges

MPS has solved many business challenges for this long standing customer, integrating a diverse range of systems, devices, applications and technologies to create a coherent voice and data communication solution. It is these capabilities that differentiates MPS from its competitors, in turn delivering business process change and return on investment.

Initially all sites were connected directly to the Internet which presented two fundamental issues. No Quality of Service for voice networking and difficulty controlling internet security in the very sensitive environment of childcare. The Internet presents exciting teaching and learning opportunities which the customer wanted to fully embrace, so whitelists were loaded on to all computers at all locations to avoid inadvertent access to inappropriate material. Managing this, together with the provision of general communications and IT support, presented the IT team with an increasingly onerous remit as the estate continued to grow.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a play-based curriculum for children from birth to five years, which allows children to explore and learn in an environment that is secure and safe, yet challenging. Busy Bees wanted to enhance EYFS by utilising web-based applications, on tablet computers in all nurseries,



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helping staff provide children with amazing activities and produce online learning journals which can be securely accessed by parents.

In early 2018, with continued growth of two National Support Centres and the nursery estate, voice solution resilience and telephony costs, in particular related to continuing to install separate telephone systems in nurseries as required were required to be addressed. A call centre was required at the second National Support Centre. Busy Bees wanted to integrate its mobiles with its fixed telephony. The group uses 600 mobile devices.

## Solution Outline

Busy Bees relies upon MPS as a turnkey communications partner capable of designing, delivering and supporting integrated “end-to-end” solutions for its voice and data networking requirements.

With networking requirements spread across over 360 sites, how sites are joined together for voice and data communication is, quite obviously, critical. MPS managed the phased migration of all sites from Direct Internet Access to a fully managed private Wide Area

Network which supports Quality of Service and where all sites can only access the Public Internet via a centralised managed secure web gateway and next generation firewall. The appliance controls all Internet access and content eliminating the need for whitelists on devices. The private network



enables the IT team to support users and manage internet access remotely, in a secure environment as well as providing Voice over IP capability across the entire estate.

MPS deployed a managed dual-band Wi-Fi solution across all sites comprising 4 mutually resilient controllers (2 at each National Support Centre) and in excess of 1200 access points. In conjunction with the private Wide Area Network the Wi-Fi solution provides tablet and other mobile device users with secure, managed

access to Busy Bees systems and the Internet.

Panasonic telephone systems at the National Support Centres have been upgraded to dual resilient NSX1000 IP Voice Servers with SIP trunks, to enhance Disaster Recovery and reduce costs. They also provide Mobile UC and SIP clients, enabling the integration of existing Android and iOS devices as well as call sequencing, ACD, call recording and reporting for the new call centre.

The NSX1000 solution provides for National Support Centre expansion as well as telephony requirements in new and acquired nurseries. At the National Support Centre, expansion has been dealt with by fixed IP phones and SIP clients for mobile integration via wireless. The NSX1000 systems are networked with legacy Panasonic KXTDE Hybrid IP-PBX on site which are used as gateways for digital and analogue devices, thus protecting the customer’s investment in this area. Telephony requirements at nurseries, which have previously been addressed by the installation of individual



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telephone systems, are now dealt with by deploying fixed and DECT IP phones networked to the National Support Centre NSX1000, over the Quality-of-Service-enabled private wide-area network, delivering cost savings as well as the enhanced and standardised functionality of the NSX1000.

Mobile workers can now hot desk between both National Support Centres and nurseries with NSX1000 end points.

## Our Value Proposition

What value is MPS really adding to Busy Bees?

Busy Bees is able to outsource the management of its voice and data networking infrastructure to MPS as a trusted “partner”; a relationship which has enabled Busy Bees to operate with a lower IT headcount than would otherwise be required.

The MPS solution ticks all the

customer’s boxes in terms of unified communications, mobile integration, call centre functionality, DECT, disaster recovery, security and reporting.

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## About MPS

MPS Networks plc was incorporated in 1991. Our mission is to work increasingly closely with every customer, to add increasing value, underpinned by technology but ultimately driving business process change and Return on Investment.

MPS is a Cisco Select and Microsoft Gold Partner, amongst many other accreditations, and this case study is just one example of what can be achieved by the type of genuine “end-to-end” single supplier systems integration MPS can deliver.

