

International recruitment with the local touch: Approach People

Few companies understand the global nature of modern business better than Approach People Recruitment, the international agency trusted by major brands like Apple and Dior. An innovative international telephony solution from AirSpeed Telecom plays a key role in the agency's success, allowing it to deliver a personalised service with maximum flexibility for its staff.

Headquartered in Ireland with offices across Europe, the agency has established a solid reputation in international recruitment. Today the company is well-known for its ability to match the right candidates to their roles, which often require multiple languages and the highest levels of sector experience.

Approach People has grown so successfully partly because of the innovative way it has structured its business. Unlike many agencies, which maintain geographically separate candidate databases, Approach People has developed a unique global pool of more than 250,000 candidates: its consultants, across all its offices, work collaboratively to maintain and access the central candidate pool, from wherever they are.

For a number of years the company had struggled to find a communications partner who could provide an international calling solution with the same degree of centralisation. The task wasn't an easy one.

"We were looking for a Skype-type system but it had to be on a professional level that would allow flexible access for all our offices, so that we would be free to work anywhere," said Nela Pavlouskova, Communication Manager for Approach People Recruitment. "Our consultants are often moving, travelling across our offices in different countries. We wanted a reliable calling system that was not fixed so that wherever our consultants are, they can work as if they had their office with them."

The search for real flexibility in voice services

The company had tried to make its vision work by establishing different telephony contracts with providers in every territory where it operated. This administrative complexity, plus quality issues with network connections and a relatively high cost of connectivity, meant the company needed to seek a different solution.

When one of the company's IT suppliers, DC Networks, recommended AirSpeed Telecom, Approach People quickly realised that improvements in IP telephony now made it possible to realise its long-held vision of truly centralised telephony across its international offices.

AirSpeed & Approach People at a glance:

- International recruitment agency focused on multilingual candidates for global brands including Apple, Dior and Citibank
- An internationally oriented business, including a "single-view" centralised candidate database for all its territories, required a similarly centralised telephony solution
- AirSpeed was selected to design, deploy and manage an innovative IP telephony service. Includes centralised call routing through Dublin (via a 30-channel SIP trunk and a scalable 5Mb internet leased line) and territory-specific phone numbers for European offices
- Unique voice solution overcame significant challenges with costly standalone telephony contracts in each territory, consolidating its vendor relationships to just one with AirSpeed
- Reliable, toll-call inbound and outbound voice calls delivered to every office, with all calls routed via Approach People's Irish headquarters using SIP.
- Huge improvement in work flexibility: consultants can make and take calls at any Approach People office using their computer, connected IP handset and local internet connection
- AirSpeed model of extending central calling to international offices supports Approach People as it looks to expand into new territories

A global solution for a globally focused agency

What AirSpeed Telecom suggested has become the ideal infrastructure for Approach People's challenges. A scalable 5 Mb internet link and 30-channel SIP trunk now connect its Dublin headquarters directly to AirSpeed Telecom's core network. All inbound and outbound calls are provided via the Dublin IP PBX, including calls to and from its offices in Dublin, Paris, Lyon, Geneva and Barcelona.

Consultants can now make and receive calls using IP handsets connected directly to their computers, leveraging the branch office's local internet connection for voice services.

While Nela said that the solution eliminates previous issues like high calling rates and the complexity of separate contracts with providers in each country, the new solution's reliability is what means most to Approach People.

"Our main driver wasn't to roll out IP telephony in order to generate cost savings. What is paramount for us is the quality and performance of the system: our company has many important clients, and our telephony system simply has to be available at all times," she said. "AirSpeed is the best partner we found who could deliver an IP telephony solution - everything just works, and if there are any issues with the system, they're very fast to help us resolve them. They're able to give us the peace of mind that it's not going to fail."

"A feeling of proximity is important in recruitment"

"A feeling of proximity is important in the recruitment process," Nela explained. "Our client companies love that we have a Europe-wide database of multilingual candidates, but they also want the sense that we are geographically close to them. The AirSpeed solution lets us strike that balance."

The AirSpeed solution has also given the company the work flexibility it needs: wherever its consultants are, even when located in a different branch, they can now make and receive calls as if they were at their own desk. This freedom was exactly what Approach People envisioned years ago when it imagined a completely flexible telephone system; developments in technology, and the new relationship with AirSpeed, have finally made it possible.

"From a communications point of view, AirSpeed has helped us erase the borders in Europe," Nela said. "They're supporting the way we work with companies, which is to find them the right person for the right role, regardless of where their company is, where the candidate is, or where we are. We wanted a system that was easy to use and really global, and we've finally achieved that."