

Marlowe Theatre

Top UK Theatre Turned to RingCentral When Their Legacy Phone System Nearing its Final Act

marlowetheatre.com



INDUSTRY:
Arts, nonprofit

YEAR FOUNDED:
2011

HQ:
Canterbury, UK

EMPLOYEES:
200

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A major contributor to the UK’s performing arts

When it comes to live arts in the United Kingdom, it would be difficult to overstate The Marlowe Theatre’s contribution—in terms of entertainment, education, and economic impact.

As Kent’s regional theatre, the nonprofit organisation attracts many of the biggest productions from around the country. In just the 2019/2020 season, The Marlowe’s 562 performances sold more than 352,000 tickets. And during the same time period, nearly 3,000 young people took part in the organisation’s learning and participation theatre

programmes. All told, The Marlowe's work contributed £41 million to the local economy.

Given this tremendous impact, The Marlowe is clearly succeeding in its mission to ensure that everyone, regardless of their circumstances or background, has an opportunity to experience the magic of live theatre—as both audiences and participants.

But although the organisation is contributing to UK culture via a millennia-old art form, the team behind The Marlowe recognised the need to transition their operations to a modern, digital infrastructure. One of the applications most in need of digital transformation was The Marlowe's phone system.

A phone system that left them eager to exit stage left

During its early years, The Marlowe Theatre functioned under the ownership of the Canterbury City Council. Under government rules, the organisation was obligated to use the Council's IT and telephony solutions—which fell far short of The Marlowe's own needs and goals.

Then the organisation became an independently run charity in December 2018. At that time, The Marlowe still had a two-year commitment to its existing phone and call center systems vendor. But the IT team began eagerly preparing for the day when they could transition to a business communications solution of their own choosing.

“We had been forced into a telephony infrastructure that required onsite servers, lacked much of the functionality we wanted, and wasn't integrated into our call centre,” recalls Paul Turner, The Marlowe's IT & Finance Director. “Because of the disjointed system, if someone called into one part of the business and needed transferring to the call centre, we would have to ask them to hang up and dial a different number—we knew there must be a better solution”.

“We began a thorough investigation of cloud solutions and RingCentral won out in terms of features, ease of use, flexibility, and cost. They were one of the only providers to have an integrated Unified Communications and Contact Centre solution meaning the whole business could use the same phone system and eliminate some of our previous challenges. Also, we knew RingCentral could integrate with all our existing tools such as email, chat, and CRM providing us a single unified view of the customer.”

"The way RingCentral Contact Centre integrates customer calls and emails into a shared workflow for our agents has revolutionised how we work."

– Jason Green, Systems Manager, The Marlowe Theatre

The surprisingly seamless transition

For an IT migration that can be as disruptive as moving to a new communications solution, the switchover to RingCentral was incredibly uneventful. "You expect some hitches during an initiative like this," says Jason Green, The Marlowe's Systems Manager. "But we didn't have any. The RingCentral rollout was surprisingly smooth."

Jason gives much of the credit for the seamless migration to support from RingCentral. "The Professional Services team really helped us with onboarding, training, setting up the integrations, and helping us test the various services like our call queues," he says. "They were a big part of the reason the rollout was so successful."

Finally, a phone system that gives a great performance

And if they were pleased with the migration to RingCentral, the team at The Marlowe was downright thrilled with what their new unified communications solution enabled them to do.

"With our old customer service infrastructure, email and telephony were separate," Paul says. "Agents responding to emails had to type them out in their email program, which took time and led to an inconsistent voice and even inaccurate answers. RingCentral Contact Centre let us integrate email right into our agents' workflows and preload answers to common questions. As one of our managers says, that's a 'game-changer.'"

Another advantage The Marlowe's team is enjoying is RingCentral Contact Centre's flexible and user-friendly call menus. "We've been able to set up different on-hold messages for members versus non-members, and even create priority numbers for our major donors and other VIPs. Along with features such as call whisper which gives our agents information on the caller before they answer, we can now give the personalised customer experience that we've always aimed for." Paul explains.

"Another brilliant thing about Contact Centre is that we can now give customers the option of getting a call back rather than waiting in the

queue,” adds Jason. “Our agents love it and our customers love it. That’s another way RingCentral is helping us offer a higher quality of service to our customers.”

Marlowe also leveraged RingCentral’s pre-built Google Chrome extension to improve productivity of their agents as Jason explains, “when using Chrome our agents absolutely love that a prompt pops up next to the number in the browser so they can just click to dial through RingCentral. Previously we used to have to copy and paste the number into our dialler so it saves time and reduces errors.”

"Moving to RingCentral Contact Centre has allowed us to provide the level of personalised customer service we've always wanted to offer."

– Paul Turner, IT & Finance Director, The Marlowe Theatre

RingCentral continues its starring role

During challenging times, RingCentral helped Marlowe’s staff adapt to remote working and remain flexible. As Paul says “Some staff don’t want two devices so they can simply download the RingCentral app on their personal mobile and have the freedom to control availability, maintain their business number and have secure access to their business contacts wherever they are—this means we can get rid of some of those business mobile costs.”

“Things are changing all of the time at the moment but we know if we have a show cancelled tomorrow, we can easily ensure more agents are available to answer calls and maintain our brilliant customer service.”

For more information, please contact one of our solution experts. Visit ringcentral.co.uk or call 0800 098 8136.

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RingCentral UK Ltd. 85 Uxbridge Road, 4th Floor, Ealing, London, W5 5TH, UK

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