



Top UK law firm to reduce mobile costs by 40% and cut 24 hours off dictation turnaround with BlackBerry solution

Nabarro is a major UK commercial law firm renowned for a jargon-free approach to client relations and wide-ranging expertise. The firm's headquarters are in central London, with offices in Sheffield and Brussels. Nabarro operates in a number of industry sectors and legal disciplines. As one of the country's top law firms, it currently has over 130 partners leading over 400 lawyers.

The Challenge

Nabarro's telecoms infrastructure had grown unwieldy, according to Andrew Powell, Director of IT at the firm. During the recent economic downturn the situation had come to a head. Powell was convinced that if he could simplify the systems he could improve the firm's productivity and generate cost savings.

A review of the firm's systems and user needs revealed a couple of promising areas for improvement. One was retiring overlapping technologies such as DECT and standalone mobile telephony. Another was mobilising its existing BigHand digital dictation system. "Although many of the lawyers consider themselves to be office-bound, when you look closely at how they work you realise that they are actually quite mobile. Most commute and many work off-site at the client's premises. We wanted to optimise the use of this time for our lawyers," says Powell. The challenge was finding a technology that would make all this possible, while ensuring strict information security, due to the highly-confidential nature of the firm's work.

The Solution

Nabarro didn't have to look far to find the answer. Five years previously, the firm had started using a BlackBerry® solution to provide mobile email to lawyers, so Powell knew that the BlackBerry solution met the firm's security requirements. At first BlackBerry® smartphones had been deployed to 30-40 people, but the number "grew and grew over the years," says Powell, until they had about 460 devices. Most of the devices, however, were used for mobile email, calendar and contacts only - many BlackBerry smartphone users also carried mobile phones for voice communications.

Benefits

40% reduction in mobile costs

Reduced transcription turnaround by 24 hours

Increased personal productivity

Secure dictation & instruction on the move

Improved communications efficiency



BigHand screenshot on the BlackBerry® Bold™ 9000 smartphone

Powell wanted to see if there was a way to use the BlackBerry solution for more than just email. After discussions with its mobile operator and BigHand, a member of the BlackBerry® Alliance Program, Nabarro decided to replace the firm's BlackBerry smartphones and mobile phones with latest generation BlackBerry® Curve™ smartphones. They would be used for email, calendar and contacts and come pre-installed with newsreaders (Financial Times and Reuters), Google Maps and LinkedIn applications. Voice communications would also be activated on approximately half the fleet to begin with.

The upgrade would also enable Nabarro to deploy BigHand for BlackBerry smartphones to all their lawyers. In the past, the only way lawyers could do dictation in the field was to carry around one of the firm's portable recording devices. Besides being inconvenient (the lawyers had to reserve one ahead of time) they regularly caused backlogs in the digital dictation workflow. "Transcription had to wait until the lawyer returned to the office which delayed turnaround and swamped the secretaries with hours of transcription," explains Powell.

At the same time, Nabarro decided to migrate to BlackBerry Enterprise Server v5 to take full advantage of the built-in high availability features. As Powell explains, "as part of our business continuity planning, we've installed a second BlackBerry Enterprise Server at our Sheffield office, so even if the London-based lawyers can't come into the office they can keep working via their BlackBerry smartphones."

The Benefits

BigHand for BlackBerry enables fee earners to dictate 'on the go' via their BlackBerry smartphones, providing a much faster and far more secure method of working than tapes, and giving secretarial staff instant access to dictations as soon as they have been submitted. According to Powell, "dictations are safer on the BlackBerry smartphones – and turned around faster – than they ever were on the old portable recorders. We've cut 24 hours from the turnaround time."

The BlackBerry solution has also increased personal productivity. With applications like BigHand available on the smartphones, it gives users functionality beyond just email. For example, many lawyers now use BigHand to give instructions or submit notes to colleagues, not just dictate letters and other documents.

The solution has also helped streamline costs. For starters, by eliminating the ownership costs of the mobile phones and the portable digital recorders, Powell estimates that Nabarro has more than paid for the licensing costs of BigHand for BlackBerry. Moreover, he estimates that moving to the new generation of BlackBerry smartphones will reduce mobile costs by up to 40% within 12 months. Harder to quantify, but just as important, the BlackBerry solution with BigHand will help improve the cost-effectiveness of the existing BigHand digital dictation workflow. "We'll be able to avoid the unpredictable expenses that used to be created by a sudden influx of hours of urgent dictation and transcriptions," says Powell.

"Our goal is to give the lawyers more than just email and calendar with the BlackBerry solution. BigHand is just a first step," says Powell.

www.blackberry.co.uk/casestudies

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Andrew Powell,
Director of IT, Nabarro LLP

Used by over 1,000 organizations globally, BigHand voice productivity software allows professionals to record, edit and send voice files or verbal tasks via BlackBerry® smartphone to office based support, outsourced services or convert voice to text. Recordings submitted via BigHand for BlackBerry smartphone instantly enter the office workflow, and are tracked via status updates, priorities and alerts. BigHand software helps firms expedite the document production process, reduce support & hardware costs and improve client service.