

# Abercrombie and Kent

embarks on a global journey with Mitel

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## Abercrombie and Kent (A&K) is an

internationally renowned luxury adventure travel company. With over 48 offices in 23 countries it offers a wide range of holidays to more than 100 countries on all seven continents.

### About Abercrombie and Kent

- For more than forty years, Abercrombie & Kent (A&K) has been internationally recognized as the first name in luxury adventure travel. Born in 1962 as a safari company in Nairobi, Kenya, A&K's unparalleled travel and tour operations now extend across the globe to more than one hundred countries on all seven continents. Forty-eight fully-fledged destination management companies ensure the "insider access" that only a local staff can provide. For more information, visit [www.abercrombiekent.com](http://www.abercrombiekent.com), [www.abercrombiekent.co.uk](http://www.abercrombiekent.co.uk) or [www.abercrombiekent.com.au](http://www.abercrombiekent.com.au)

### Customer Needs

- A single, global communications solution, suitable for every office in 23 different countries
- To improve the flow of information around the company for sharing ideas and industry insight
- To increase customer service levels and improve competitive advantage
- To ease administration through standardized systems and processes
- A centralized roll-out and on-going management
- To reduce communications costs

### Solution Components

- MiVoice Business with 3300 Controller
- MiVoice IP phones
- MiContact Center Enterprise
- MiVoice Enterprise Manager



A&K has around 2,000 employees and 40 years experience operating in the travel industry. The company prides itself on delivering an exceptional level of customer service and as a result requires the most reliable communications in place to deliver on this promise.

## Taking the leap

Traditionally each A&K office sourced its own telecommunications system locally. The result was a wide variety of telecoms solutions across the company without a uniform platform or integration and no economies of scale.

Keen to standardize its systems and invest for the future, A&K researched the IP communications market and went to tender. A&K realized that a Mitel® IP solution would be both scalable and suitable across the board, from its smallest offices right up to its UK headquarters.

Mitel also offered a single point of contact for the rollout and management of the system. This was a key differentiator for A&K's chief information officer, Philip Napleton, who can now make a single call to his account manager to initiate a new implementation, regardless of which country the office is located in.

"Delivering the best possible customer service to our clients is of paramount importance to us and by moving to an IP environment we can communicate far more efficiently both internally and externally. Our staff are constantly sharing information about destinations and experiences and the Mitel communications system allows them to do that far more easily and cost effectively. We anticipate making a significant leap forward in our level of customer service in addition to enviable cost savings."

- *Philip Napleton*  
*IT Director*  
*Abercrombie and Kent*

## Results

Greater automation and intelligence leading to improved customer service

Streamlined internal communications across the company

Reduced call costs, particularly on international calls

Global communications directory for the first time

Reduced IT administration complexity and costs through centralized management

## Blueprint for the future

A&K has chosen to standardize on a MiVoice Business solution with IP phones throughout its entire organization. The forward-looking company, which places customer service at the heart of its value proposition, has also rolled out a MiContact Center Enterprise to improve first line customer contact and efficiency. In addition, the global solution will be centrally managed by the IT team in London using MiVoice Enterprise Manager, enabling set up and configuration changes to be made remotely to any system in any office.



Philip Napleton, Chief Information Officer at A&K said, "Delivering the best possible customer service to our clients is of paramount importance to Abercrombie and Kent. By moving to an IP environment A&K destination experts can communicate far more effectively both internally and externally. Our teams are constantly sharing information about destinations and experiences and the Mitel communications system allows them to do that far more easily and cost effectively. We anticipate making a significant leap forward in our level of customer service in addition to realizing international calling cost savings."

As A&K grew it became clear that a more automated and intuitive system was required to save time and enable customer-facing staff to focus on what they do best – advising on travel. A critical factor in its choice of system was that customers should not feel as though they are calling a contact center; where they feel that they are just a number in a queue.

MiContact Center Enterprise automatically distributes calls and enables more effective enquiry management. In addition, A&K is keen to use the technology to deliver a more personalized experience, when a customer calls, the consultant handling the call will be automatically "screen popped" with useful customer background, such as where and when they last went on holiday, if they had any issues and so on. The call can then be dealt with more effectively and quickly.

## State of play

The main driver for A&K to move to an IP communications system was to deliver superior personal service. The Mitel implementation will allow A&K to fulfil this objective.

"Abercrombie and Kent operates at the top end of the market and our customers expect a highly personalized, professional service," said Philip Napleton "Thanks to the IP applications that layers seamlessly on our Mitel platform, we will now be able to ensure customers are recognized and are able to speak to a well-informed representative every time they call."

Further benefits are also resulting from migrating to the Mitel IP communications system. The cost savings on inter-office calls are significant and will increase as more and more offices come on board. Employees also have the convenience of a global directory and extension numbering, which makes tracking down the right person a much quicker and easier process.

From an IT perspective having a common set of management and technical procedures means that economies of scale are made, not only in the upfront investment but also in the on-going system administration. By managing the communications system internally for the first time A&K also benefits from being self-sufficient and not having to rely on an external supplier to make configuration changes.

## A phased approach

A&K is rolling out the Mitel system in a phased approach, beginning with its offices in the UK, Australia, South Africa, Botswana, India, Peru and France, where over 400 users are already up and running. The next phase will take the system to Egypt followed by Italy and New Zealand. By the end of the two-year implementation the Mitel IP communications system will have replaced existing telephone systems in A&K's offices around the globe.

With the world-wide roll out underway, A&K has major plans to integrate other applications, such as sales planning tools. Having implemented a converged IP solution makes this a more straightforward process.

In addition, the company is considering rolling out the Mitel Teleworker Solution to enable more flexible working practices. The Teleworker Solution will enable employees to work more effectively from beyond the office. Those employees that spend a considerable amount of time out of the office will have the same functionality when on the road, in a hotel or at home. This will reap major productivity benefits for mobile workers while saving A&K money on mobile phone and hotel bills.



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