



Winning Communications for Garden Court Chambers' Barristers



www.gardencourtchambers.co.uk

Founded in 1974, Garden Court Chambers is the largest barristers' chambers in London with 200 leading barristers and 25 expert QCs providing legal advice and services to solicitors, members of the public and organisations around the world. In England and Wales, New Zealand, Australia, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong, barristers are self-employed solo practitioners who, to reduce costs, share physical premises – called chambers – including conference rooms, ITC infrastructure and administrative staff. Reliable communications are critical to a barristers' chambers – if the phones aren't ringing, then work is not coming in or progressing. When Garden Court Chambers needed to update its communications infrastructure, it had to be done fast, without losing any direct dial-in numbers (DDI) and the technology solution had to provide its barristers with easy-to-use calling, messaging, meeting, always-on continuous collaboration, and more, with no hidden costs.

Experiences Matter

Experiences matter when seeking legal help and advice, and the experience of the legal team providing that help and advice matters also. Garden Court Chambers was using a legacy on-premise phone system with direct dial hard phones on each barrister's desk with calls transferred through the switchboard. This was a limited way of working. It meant a receptionist had to be on-site to manage the switchboard and, with only a few licenses available, video conferences had to be set-up by dedicated staff. Barristers



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—**Dan Bunce**, Garden Court Chambers

were unable to move quickly to fulfil their own business needs – to find a phone number they had to call reception, and requests for expensive access to alternative video conferencing apps were increasing rapidly. In addition, although it was usual for barristers working away from the chambers to provide clients with their mobile numbers, transferring calls between mobiles was arduous and call-forwarding from a desk phone to a mobile number could only be done by the IT admin logging into the phone system.

These limitations meant Garden Court Chambers was already looking at how to enable work-from-anywhere communications and collaboration when the pandemic hit and then, with all barristers and staff required to work from home, finding a solution became an imperative. In addition to the new technology solution providing easy-to-use calling, messaging, meeting, always-on continuous collaboration and more, it was critical for the transition to happen within a specific timeframe to minimise disruption and fit around workload – only one month – and that no DDIs or working days were lost in the process.

Dan Bunce, IT Systems Project Manager for Garden Court Chambers, puts it this way: “Communications are critical to a barristers’ chambers. If the phones aren’t ringing, then work isn’t coming in and cases aren’t being progressed.”

Digital Workplace

Because experiences matter, Garden Court Chambers needed to provide its barristers with the best communications experience possible. This meant moving away from the old way of working where separate on-premise tools were used to connect, communicate and collaborate, to a new world of work where cloud-based solutions support cooperation between people in different locations and time-zones.

“Barristers must be available all hours of the day and all days of the week, so they need a digital workplace with no departmental silos, always-on access to information from any location, at any time, and persistent team-enabled workstream collaboration for a true client- and legal team-centric experience. This meant the cloud,” says Dan Bunce.

Dan had a shopping list of challenges that he wanted to address and looked at several cloud-based communication solutions. He wanted a single technology and service provider, as his previous experience of having different providers separately responsible for lines and phone system had been poor. “When things go wrong, they each blame the other,” he says.

CHALLENGES

- On-prem system required receptionists to be on-site to provide directory access and work switchboard
- Limited video licences, with staff required to set-up calls, resulted in requests for expensive alternatives
- Arduous call forwarding from within system and only possible to one remote device
- Barristers had to contact reception to find a number for a colleague, partner, or client
- Limited support for flexible remote working

VALUE CREATED

- One DDI to reach barristers on any device, anywhere. Calls, chat, meetings, collaboration on just one app
- Workstream collaboration keeps all group comms and sharing of even large files in one place
- Workstream groups can include members from outside the organisation and abroad
- Ease of use for staff, and barristers able to manage own contact preferences
- Ability to assess sound and video quality with analytics to identify causes and fixes
- No hidden costs, just granular and transparent pricing with great support

SOLUTION USED

- Avaya Cloud Office® by RingCentral®
- Avaya OneCloud UCaaS

As IT Systems Project Manager, Dan wanted a UCaaS cloud-based solution for its resiliency, automatic updates and the simplicity of an all-in-one application that runs on any platform and does calling, messaging, meeting, and more.

“With cloud-based comms, there are fewer points of failure as someone, somewhere, will have an internet connection and be able to take calls. Previously if we had an outage, we lost calls which is a major problem for barristers,” explains Dan. “Another benefit of having a cloud-communications system is that its technology is always current thanks to automatic updates. This is important, as I’ve had problems in the past keeping firmware up-to-date.”

Dan was approached by Fortay Connect, an Avaya ecosystem partner and expert in customer experience and unified communications. After a consultative process to identify Garden Court Chambers’ needs to ensure best fit for the barristers’ requirements, Fortay Connect recommended Avaya Cloud Office® by RingCentral® on the Avaya OneCloud UCaaS platform.

One Predictable Bill

Knowing time was of the essence, Fortay Connect moved quickly to arrange a demo and ensure that if Garden Court Chambers went with Avaya Cloud Office, all the stakeholders could move quickly to ensure migration and installation would happen within the month allowed to ensure no loss of business.

In addition to its ability to deliver a world-class all-in-one cloud communications solution, the chambers chose Avaya Cloud Office because it provides call analytics, straightforward billing and is easy-to-use. At first, staff trialled some integrated apps from more familiar tools but soon found they didn’t need them – saving the additional cost – as the native platform is so intuitive and easy to use.

“With Avaya Cloud Office, barristers get one number for calls, chat, video meetings, file sharing and collaboration and it reaches them wherever they are, on any device they are using. They can easily manage their own preferences for call forwarding, availability, presence, messaging, and video meetings,” says Dan Bunce.

“In addition to all this, I am particularly pleased to have some analytic ability, allowing me to assess call quality and drill down to discover why video or sound might be poor, so it can be fixed,” he says. “A final deciding factor in the choice of Avaya Cloud Office was that the other solutions I looked at had hidden factors in the pricing, such as call tariffs or monthly hardware costs. Avaya’s pricing was transparent and granular, with a single predictable monthly bill, which makes a lot of difference.”



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Winning Communications

In less than a month, and a couple of days ahead of deadline, the installation team from Avaya and Fortay Connect performed a seamless transition to Avaya Cloud Office. The speed of deployment was crucial in protecting Garden Court Chambers as, if any DDI numbers had been lost or working days missed, its barristers would have lost business. “Everything happened when it should,” says Dan Bunce. “Cloud enabled the fast migration, which protected the business, and everything was done when it needed to be done. Since installation, we have been well looked after by Avaya and the support team.”

Through the Avaya OneCloud UCaaS platform, Garden Court Chambers is delivering a massive experience improvement for the barristers, staff, and barristers’ clients. This is because Avaya Cloud Office is an always-on digital workplace enabling barristers and staff to work from anywhere at any time in a collaborative, workstream environment. Previously, the legal team working on a case had to create file-sharing links to be circulated via email. Now everything relevant to a case can be securely shared within a dedicated and persistent Avaya Cloud Office group – even with stakeholders outside of the chambers or overseas – eliminating the need to search through emails or the chance of missing downloads.

Dan concludes, “The new platform has been revelatory. Not only does it answer all of the needs we outlined, it also provides a single supplier of connectivity and platform, and it is enabling entirely new ways of collaboration. This in turn is reducing the amount of time and work involved in each case, accelerating timeframes and the amount our barristers can get done every day.”

Furthermore, the single number that reaches each barrister for calls, chat, video meetings, file sharing and collaboration can be managed by themselves. They choose how they can be reached and when, allowing them to be fully connected to the people and information they need, no matter where they are, what device they have with them, or what network they’re connected to.

Future-Proofed

With barristers now able to manage their own call preferences, Garden Court Chambers hopes that over time there will be fewer calls into reception needing to be forwarded on. However, with Avaya Cloud Office, receptionists are also empowered to work remotely and are assisted by the ‘presence’ feature, which indicates which barristers are available to take a call or not, saving time and improving the client, receptionist, and barrister experience.

In the future, Garden Court Chambers is considering moving towards a hot-desking office model and may even move buildings. The transition to cloud-based unified communications means that if either of these plans moves ahead, Garden Court Chambers will not lose capital investment in hard phones that are tied to specific desks and any physical move to new premises will be easy from a communications point of view.



About Fortay Connect

Fortay Connect are experts in Customer Experience & Unified Communications, partnering with the market leading vendors to transform the way your people collaborate and how you engage with your customers. Our mission is simple, to improve the way your business interacts with its customers and as a team. We possess the industry's highest achievable accreditations and help customers transform their communication across the globe. Meaning our customers can focus on running their business, not managing their IT. For more information, visit www.fortayconnect.com



About Garden Court Chambers

Founded in 1974, Garden Court Chambers is the largest barristers' chambers in London offering clients an unrivalled breadth and depth of experience, whether advising solicitors, members of the public or organisations across the UK and around the world. Garden Court has a proud history of winning ground-breaking cases of constitutional importance. Our legal challenges have overturned great injustices in many landmark decisions. www.gardencourtchambers.co.uk



About Avaya

Businesses are built on the experiences they provide and every day millions of those experiences are built by Avaya (NYSE:AVYA). For over one hundred years, we've enabled organizations around the globe to win—by creating intelligent communications experiences for customers and employees. Avaya builds open, converged and innovative solutions to enhance and simplify communications and collaboration—in the cloud, on premise, or a hybrid of both. To grow your business, we're committed to innovation, partnership, and a relentless focus on what's next. We're the technology company you trust to help you deliver Experiences that Matter.

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