



# Outsourcing of operator services helps leading drugs company to improve customer service and reduce cost

The BT Managed Switchboard Service has enabled AstraZeneca to standardise its call reception function, improve call-answering performance, increase business resilience, and save money

KPI	Target
Calls answered within 5 seconds	95 per cent
Abandoned calls	<1.5 per cent
Call handling time	<30 seconds

All Key Performance Indicators that underpin the BT Managed Switchboard Service are regularly exceeded

## Executive Summary

AstraZeneca, one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies, has outsourced the provision of operator services for its UK locations to BT in order to standardise and improve the quality and consistency of call handling performance. The BT solution is based on the Managed Switchboard Service, utilising its custom designed outsourced contact centre capability at Selkirk in Scotland.

Incoming calls to AstraZeneca sites, or internal switchboard calls, are all now routed to Selkirk from where dedicated BT call centre agents deal with the enquiry. Calls are routed to the appropriate AstraZeneca site and extension using the BT VoIP Port platform a fully managed and hosted voice over IP connectivity service for wide area networks that uses the BT MPLS (multi-protocol label switching) network. As part of the outsourced solution BT maintains a centralised directory system listing all AstraZeneca staff and manages moves, changes and maintenance of the company's PBX (private branch exchange) estate.

The solution has enabled AstraZeneca to standardise and reduce the cost of the call reception function, whilst improving call-answering performance, extending hours of business and increasing business resilience. The solution also provides the opportunity to further improve business efficiency and effectiveness through broadening the scope of the service to embrace tasks such as centralised accident reporting and taxi bookings.

**“BT was able to offer us a fully integrated and true end-to-end voice solution; managing our contact centre environment, all the lines, and all the switches. Selecting BT also made total business sense for us given our past strong history of working together.”**

Paul Hyatt  
Technical Services Manager  
AstraZeneca

# Case study

## AstraZeneca

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**“Call answering is now much more consistent and based on best practice. We have been able to redeploy our receptionists to higher value core business, we have reduced our operating costs, and we have greatly enhanced our business continuity and disaster recovery capability.”**

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Technical Services Manager  
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### Marketplace

AstraZeneca is one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies. It is dedicated to the discovery, development, manufacture and marketing of high quality effective prescription medicines and has a very broad product portfolio, available in more than 100 countries worldwide. With 11 research and development centres and 27 manufacturing sites spanning 19 countries, AstraZeneca employs over 65,000 people. The UK is a major AstraZeneca hub with a corporate headquarters in London and six principal sites from Edinburgh in Scotland to Brixham in Devon.

### Business opportunity

Voice communication at AstraZeneca UK sites has developed over the years in response to local needs, with the result that there are a variety of private branch exchange (PBX) systems in use, each with differing support arrangements. Operator services have evolved in a similar way, with each site responsible for its own external call answering and the manual transfer of calls between sites across the public switched telephone network (PSTN).

There had also been a lack of common policy for dealing with incoming calls, with the result that the customer experience was quite variable. Paul Hyatt, Technical Services Manager at AstraZeneca, explains: “Incoming calls are often the first experience a customer has of AstraZeneca. Some of our sites provided a good service but others did not. The face of AstraZeneca has to be right and we recognised that we needed to change the model to improve and standardise service.”

Another factor was the ability of the company to deal with wide variations in incoming call volume. Paul Hyatt continues: “We had no real ability to scale up our call answering service. So, when for example, we had a new drug launch there would be a large but short-term increase in voice traffic, perhaps to a specific site. With the call-answering model we had we just couldn't cope.” AstraZeneca first considered consolidating its operator services at a single site and managing this internally, but this option was dismissed on the grounds of high cost and limited scalability.

Outsourcing of the operator service function became the favoured approach and the company issued a request for information to a number of potential service providers. Paul Hyatt says: “BT was able to offer us a fully integrated and true end-to-end voice solution; managing our contact centre environment, all the lines, and all the switches. Selecting BT also made total business sense for us given our past strong history of working together.”

### BT solution

BT proposed its Managed Switchboard Service utilising its custom-designed outsourced contact centre capability at Selkirk in Scotland. Selkirk is a 290-seat facility equipped with state of the art CRM technology and highly skilled staff. Incoming calls to AstraZeneca sites, or internal switchboard calls, are all now routed to Selkirk from where dedicated BT call centre agents deal with the enquiry. Calls are routed to the appropriate AstraZeneca site and extension over the BT VoIP Port platform, a fully managed and hosted voice over IP connectivity service for wide area networks that uses the BT MPLS (multi-protocol label switching) network. As part of the outsourced solution BT manages updates to a centralised directory system listing all AstraZeneca staff and organisations.

# Case study

## AstraZeneca

The call answering service is dimensioned to handle over 82,000 calls per annum but is fully flexible and highly scalable. It operates 24 hours a day, and core service hours are from 07.00 to 19.00 with incremental charges raised for calls received outside those times. The BT service also includes the management and maintenance of the AstraZeneca PBX estate. Agreed key performance indicators underpin the service. The principal targets are that 95 per cent of calls shall be answered within five seconds, with less than 1.5 per cent of calls abandoned and call handing times not exceeding an average of 30 seconds.

### Results

With the Managed Switchboard Service BT now handles all AstraZeneca inbound and operator enquiry calls. The solution has enabled AstraZeneca to standardise and reduce the cost of the call reception function, whilst improving call answering performance, increasing service resilience and providing a flexible capability to handle peak call volume. Despite being a global company the AstraZeneca switchboards formerly operated only between 09:00 and 17:00, but with the outsourced service the company is now open for business 24 hours-a-day with calls answered professionally at all times.

Paul Hyatt says: “Call answering is now much more consistent and based on best practice. We have been able to redeploy our receptionists to higher value core business, we have reduced our operating costs, and we have greatly enhanced our business continuity and disaster recovery capability.”

Although cost reduction was not a primary driver for the project, significant savings have been realised. Reductions of around £165,000 per annum are projected, resulting mainly from reduced call charges through not needing to route inter-site calls over the PSTN. All the key service performance indicators are regularly being exceeded and currently call-answering performance is running at an average of just 2.6 seconds.

With BT now managing and maintaining the PBX estate (regardless of original supplier) the future cost of equipment upgrade has been mitigated. The fully managed service also provides a one-stop-shop for moves and changes. Paul Hyatt concludes: “Selecting BT as our single supplier also gives us the opportunity to improve business efficiency and effectiveness through extending the scope of the service. For example we are now considering using the contact centre to centralise accident reporting, book audio conferences, and manage taxi bookings.”

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### Why BT?

- BT capability to offer an end-to-end outsourced solution
- Scalability, capability and resilience of the BT Managed Switchboard Service
- BT track record of working with AstraZeneca
- BT ability to take on management and maintenance of the existing PBX estate

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## AstraZeneca

### Technology blueprint

The outsourced call reception solution for AstraZeneca uses BT VoIP Port – BT's fully managed and hosted Voice over IP connectivity service for wide area networks – to route calls between company sites and the centralised BT contact centre at Selkirk in Scotland. VoIP Port uses BT's MPLS network to transport calls. The Selkirk site is interconnected with AstraZeneca PBX systems and its MPLS VPN via two diversely routed Digital Private Network Signalling Systems (DPNSS) circuits.

AstraZeneca Alderley Park, Horizon Place, Stanhope Gate, Brixham, Avlon, Charnwood and other UK sites are each interconnected with a local BT MPLS point of presence

through a Cisco 2651 Series Gateway. Bandwidth is set commensurate with the traffic to and from the site. MPLS allows for the prioritisation of time critical voice traffic over the network, insuring against any degradation in voice quality even at times of peak network traffic.

The service can interface to a wide variety of PBXs. For AstraZeneca this includes equipment from BT (Nortel), Avaya, Ericsson and Siemens. BT VoIP Port also enables the seamless migration from traditional time division multiplex (TDM) telephony services to IP Telephony as and when required in the future.

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### Main BT products and services

- BT Managed Switchboard Service
- BT VoIP Port
- BT MPLS

### Offices worldwide

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