

## Execution



## Dimension Data provides Execution with groundbreaking IP Telephony solution

### Industry

Financial Services

### Country

UK

### Challenge

Install and maintain a Converged Communications solution to replace an inflexible dealer board and outdated telephone system. Also required support to manage data network effectively across multiple sites.

### Solution

Converged Communications

### Results

- ▲ Highly sophisticated and functionally rich IP Telephony solution
- ▲ Reduced call costs, especially between international offices
- ▲ Visual voice and email notification and voice mail access via computer
- ▲ Click-to-dial from Outlook contacts and Execution's own CRM system, X-tream
- ▲ Call recording and barge-in facilities
- ▲ Secure internal wireless network with isolated network access for guests
- ▲ Audio conferencing capabilities
- ▲ Replicable model rolled out across other international offices.

### Executive Summary

Dimension Data provided international stockbrokers Execution with – in functionality terms – a ground-breaking IP Telephony solution.

Dimension Data also worked with Execution to maximise the positive impact of a new converged voice and data network on their day-to-day business operations. This now includes ongoing management of the IP Telephony and wireless networks. Roll-out of similar solutions in Execution's offices in the USA has taken place, and deployment in Hong Kong in 2008 is planned.

The company now has an extremely flexible converged communications solution, with optimised functionality, which reflects specific business needs. It has experienced numerous business benefits from bringing several disparate systems together under one network. High level benefits include improvements in connectivity, network performance and productivity. More specifically, for example, Execution's traders save on average 20 minutes per day each by using the click-to-dial facility to automatically dial contact numbers directly from their computer screen.

The overseas roll-out has also provided significant business continuity benefits and cost savings, and the solution has already delivered return on investment as planned.

### Client Overview

Execution is a highly successful execution-only stockbroker, providing clients with execution, sales, trading, research and corporate access. Headquartered in London with offices in Hong Kong, San Francisco and Greenwich, Connecticut, Execution has undergone rapid growth in recent years.

### Business Challenge

In 2006, Execution's CIO Richard Comish recognised that to support continued expansion and maintain the company's position as a market leader, he had to ensure the company stayed one step ahead of the competition in technology terms. Adopting an IT Telephony solution was identified as a key way to accomplish this.

Replacement of an expensive and inflexible dealerboard system, and an aging telephone system, was required. The system had reached capacity and, as a consequence, Execution was faced with a large bill to upgrade the back-end infrastructure to support any new user. In an expanding business these costs were unacceptable. Mr Comish therefore decided to upgrade the entire system and bring the dealerboard and telephone systems together on a single, scalable IP network. The new system would need to comply with FSA regulations, which meant including a voice recording facility.

Execution then looked for a world-class IT solutions provider that understood its business challenges, could design and install a bespoke system and support it once it was up and running, and provide advice on and assist with future developments..

### Relationship History

After an introduction by Cisco – Execution’s hardware supplier – and following a competitive pitch, Dimension Data was selected to deploy the new IP Telephony solution. Following a successful implementation, Dimension Data was invited to reconfigure the whole data network and conduct the international roll-out.

Commenting on why Dimension Data was selected, Richard says he was extremely impressed by the technical ability of the team: “The Dimension Data engineers have got to be some of the best in the country; we’ve yet to throw a problem at them that they can’t solve.”

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usability functions such as a facility for traders to interject into calls at any time – a real advantage in the industry – and, through integration with the Exchange messaging system, time-saving visual voicemails on the PC screen.

Dimension Data assisted Executions’ in-house software development team to integrate ‘click-to-dial’ functionality into their CRM system, ‘X-Stream’. The traders have found this an invaluable productivity tool as it allows them to instantly dial a contact with a press of their mouse button when using the CRM system, instead of dialling manually or looking for the contact’s speed-dial button.

A Witness Voice Recording system was a key element of the solution in compliance terms. When required, the recording of any call can be quickly retrieved and emailed to those who need to act on it.

According to Mike Robinson, system availability is of vital importance in this industry, where an outage of only a few minutes has major financial implications. “The new system was therefore designed from the ground up, with no single point of failure,” he says. “Unlike the traditional chassis based systems that it replaced, the new system has components that are distributed across Executions’ datacentres to give spatial redundancy. This means that the system can

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According to Dimension Data’s Converged Communications Director, Mike Robinson, the global IT services and solutions provider is now Execution’s technology partner of choice, offering sound, practical advice on maximising the effectiveness of the new system, and providing strategic consultancy on future developments.

### Solution Provided

Managed IP telephony with optimised functionality

Dimension Data fulfilled Execution’s requirement for an IP Telephony solution to replace the existing phones and dealerboard system.

One hundred and thirty new handsets were introduced, which offered employees significant new

heal itself even if an area of the datacentre was to lose all power and connectivity.”

The system was also connected to analogue ‘Private Wires’ that are traditionally used to directly connect traders to key contacts. This was the first time that this had been done in a Cisco Unified Communications environment.

Dimension Data now provides ongoing support so that Mr Comish and his team can be confident that the system is working to its full potential, and so that they do not have to re-train to support the solution.

Network reconfiguration and upgrade

During the IP Telephony deployment, it became apparent that Execution’s legacy data network needed comprehensive reconfiguring and upgrading.

Dimension Data's engineers reconfigured the switches and routers to prioritise access to the network for time-sensitive applications – such as Bloomberg feeds - giving traders a real edge.

A secure wireless network was also established and configured to provide maximum flexibility for employees and allow external visitors to securely access the internet when they were on site; i.e. during regular stockbroker/client meetings or senior industry executive get-togethers. This solution allows all employees to have instant access to the network from any location in the office, enabling hot-desking and remote access. And visitors can now access the internet without any risk to the security of Execution's confidential information.

Once the initial UK set up was completed, Dimension Data worked with Execution to replicate the solution for installation in its USA offices. Describing how this worked, Mike Robinson says: "We developed a template for deploying an IP Telephony solution in any Execution office. Through this replication the total cost of the USA IP Telephony solution was around half of what would usually be expected with a new design."

### How We Delivered

The entire IP Telephony deployment took approximately three months from start to finish - including around one month of on-site activity. "The team was here for an incredibly short time given the complexity of this installation," says Mr Comish, "and yet they delivered the solution on time, without a hitch and with minimal disruption to our business."

The new IP Telephony solution was built to run in tandem with the existing systems, which made the overall transfer seamless. Richard was impressed with the flexibility and skills of the Dimension Data consultants: "The Dimension Data experts achieved things with the Cisco equipment that even Cisco didn't know could be done!"

There was considerable deviation from the original brief, however, as Mr Comish discovered more about the capabilities of a converged network – working with the Dimension Data engineers to ascertain what could be done to increase productivity. "They asked me 'what do you want the end point to be?', which was refreshing. I feel like we gained a better solution because of this consultative approach. They didn't try and sell unnecessary kit to increase their profit margins; it was like we were part of the same team."

Richard is now working with Dimension Data to maximise the functionality of the Cisco handsets in coming months, and plans are in place to roll-out virtual meeting solutions, Microsoft Presence and notification applications - as well as extend the network to Hong Kong in 2008. And when Execution's caller network switch comes out of warranty in 2008,

Mr Cornish is confident that, rather than purchase a new switch for £60,000, the converged potential of the Cisco phone system can, in effect, replace it.

### Value Derived

Value The system has had a considerable positive impact on the way people at Execution work: "Its impact was immediate and, in short, we couldn't live without it now," says Mr Comish. "The integration of the computers with the telephone system has aided the day-to-day sales and research activity carried out by our traders. In the stock broking business, brokers need to be able to do exactly what they want to do, when they want to do it, and they will not tolerate any delays. Integration has made the accessing of relevant information instantaneous, allowing traders to operate in real time, and all from a single source: the trader's desk-top."

Also commenting on the benefits of the project, Mike Robinson says: "The phone system makes it easier for Execution employees to see where colleagues are, interject into conversations and work seamlessly alongside their USA-based employees, several of whom work to UK hours. Employees working across all of Execution's offices can now log onto their phone wherever they are in the world and use their local number. Communication by e-mail and telephone between offices is seamless and, thanks the adoption of IP Telephony, transatlantic calls are made without incurring the usual hefty costs."

The managed services offered by Dimension Data removes the need for Richard to train his own team to manage and maintain the solution. "Having Dimension Data manage our moves, adds, changes and deletions, and any network configuration, is fantastic for us. For one thing, I don't need to hire and manage a team of people to do this! And because we have experts managing this for us, there is less risk that people here, who may not be skilled in this area, will attempt this kind of activity and make a mistake which could have a huge impact on our ability to operate." The maintenance agreement also gives Mr Comish defined costs for phone maintenance over the year so that he can budget effectively for the future.

