

The Lab21 team's experience and know-how is coupled with a rapidly growing portfolio of molecular and viral diagnostics, plus pharmacogenetic and patient profiling tests, which all use cutting-edge technology. This unique combination adds value to early stage drug development, clinical trials and regulatory processes in the pharmaceutical industry – and directly to clinicians or healthcare providers as they treat and monitor patients.

Lab21 operates from extensive, state of the art laboratories, which include a Category 3 containment facility at its Cambridge site. Investment in future-proofed LIMS technology helps ensure that external regulatory requirements for public health, pharmaceutical and environmental industries are met. Furthermore, Lab21 is committed to an active, ongoing quality programme that ensures the highest standards of management, testing and service delivery.



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# Lab 21

Case Study

## The Challenge

As a new company just two years old, Lab21 did not have any legacy systems to replace. The challenge was to provide a flexible communications infrastructure that would allow Lab21 which initially operated on just two sites, Fareham and Cambridge, to function as a single entity. In addition, as a dynamic company with a growing remote workforce, it was important that staff could access the customer support database to answer queries, regardless of their physical location.

Darren Bucknall, Lab21's IT Manager, explained, "We are customer driven. We do not have dedicated receptionists, so it was important to us that anyone could answer the phone, deal with a query or easily pass it on, regardless of their geographical position".

"As a service company we receive customer calls and enquiries from both new customers and existing customers which are business critical. We realised that we needed our system to be robust and resilient whilst allowing good internal communications between everyone in the company, from senior management through to the scientists. The company ethos is that we must all be available; in a nutshell, we were looking for a faster, smarter, scaleable and more economic communications system".

## The Solution

Darren chose the Avaya IP Office system as the core of the Lab21 communications network, because, as Darren commented, "I've used it before, I knew that the Avaya system is feature rich, reliable and scaleable – it met all our requirements. Having completed cost comparisons we decided to contract Excell to install the system. Excell was proactive, making many useful suggestions which reflected their vast experience".

Excell outlined a solution which met all Lab21s requirements for a reliable, scaleable and resilient system between the two sites. The system also defined how calls would be handled internally and externally, whilst meeting Lab21s requirement to drive down ongoing communication costs. The system was designed to incorporate ISDN with a WAN link between the two sites. The link would carry both voice and data so all calls between the two sites are free of charge.

If an ISDN circuit fails at one end calls can be routed to that site from the other via the WAN link. The system is flexible; if a customer calls one office but they need to speak to someone in the other, they can be routed via the WAN link, rather than being asked to re-dial. This creates a virtual switchboard. Lab21's flexible mode of working means they wanted to make significant use of the conferencing facilities available on the Avaya Office IP system. "The system is faster and cheaper than using an external facility" enthused Darren, "Personnel can set up conference calls themselves, whether it is with internal or external partners. They simply dial those people and transfer them to the conference bridge; they don't have to make requests to the IT Dept to set the conferences up, saving a lot of IT resources and time".

Another benefit of the Avaya IP Office solution is that it allows the use of soft phones, which are particularly useful for remote workers. This means that sales people and people working from home can use their PC or laptop to connect to the Lab21 telephone network. The system allows Lab21 to recruit new staff, who can be based anywhere around the world, and work from their home location, eliminating re-location package costs.



*"Excell's expertise and the Avaya IP Office solution is a great combination. Excell is a fantastic solutions provider, their project management, installation, maintenance and support is first class"*

## Benefits/Results

**Improved customer service.** The system shows the availability status of staff; any member of staff answering the phone can advise customers when the required person will be available.

**Total scalability.** The modular build of Avaya IP Office means that growth within existing sites can easily be accommodated. Also using IP communications new sites can be incorporated into the network with minimal inter-communication costs anywhere in the world.



**Collaboration:  
Do something amazing**

## Remote Support

Excell has provided a remote support service, which means that they can support the system in situations where internal IT support is not available.

## Return on Investment

A major ongoing cost saving is the implementation of Excell's Least Cost Routing and Carrier Pre-selection. The system routes calls via the cheapest carrier, rather than just BT. "Cost savings are intrinsic in the Avaya/Excell solution" commented Darren, "We have saved the cost of dedicated receptionists, office accommodation costs have been reduced by using remote workers and, of course, we pay no call charges between our sites".

## The Future

As part of their rapid growth, Lab21 recently acquired a company in Newmarket and plan to install their third Avaya IP Office system at the site. The Newmarket site will be linked into Lab21's network as Darren pointed out, "We have had some network infrastructure installed at Newmarket and we have a VPN link between Newmarket and Cambridge, so now Newmarket can communicate with all of Lab21. We will be using Excell again to project manage and install the Newmarket system". Looking forward, Darren said, "Excell's expertise and the Avaya IP Office solution is a great combination. Excell is a fantastic solutions provider, their project management, installation, maintenance and support is first class".

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