# Foreign exchange provider to trim costs by over 20% with BlackBerry solution and BlackBerry Mobile Voice System

As the UK's leading provider of foreign currency to foreign exchange retailers, First Rate provides foreign exchange services to the Post Office's nationwide network of branches and a wide range of white-label foreign exchange services to large and small businesses across the country. Established in 2002, the company is a joint venture between the Bank of Ireland and the Post Office.

## The Challenge

First Rate employs over 300 people at four sites in the UK. There was strong demand for unified mobile email and voice communications because a significant number of these employees work on multiple sites, while others spend a great deal of time out of the office. "Staying in contact is very, very key to our business," says Adam Jacobs, IT Service Delivery Manager at First Rate. His goal was a mobile email and voice experience that was indistinguishable from a desktop email and voice experience.

But Jacobs wasn't willing to sacrifice security to achieve this goal. First Rate's IT decisions are significantly influenced by the security policies of the Bank of Ireland. "They are incredibly tight. We have to make sure that we not only comply with their security policies, but that we exceed them," adds Jacobs. He also wanted to keep First Rate's technology spend to a minimum. By minimising the amount of technology deployed, he was certain he could save money on hardware, service plans and associated support costs.

## The Solution

After sizing up their options, Jacobs and his team realised that, "for us the only option was a BlackBerry solution." For mobile email, First Rate deployed BlackBerry® Enterprise Server for Microsoft® Exchange and equipped 120 employees with BlackBerry® smartphones.

Having mobilised email to key staff, Jacobs and his team turned their attention to unified communications. But after successfully rolling Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 (OCS) to all company's PCs, they hit a snag: "when employees were away from a network connection, their OCS presence disappeared," adds Jacobs.

## Benefits

**20% savings on mobile calls**

**True landline/mobile convergence**

**Improved employee responsiveness**

**Increased customer satisfaction**

**Leverage existing PBX, voice mail and BlackBerry solution investments**

**::: BlackBerry**®

So First Rate deployed the BlackBerry® Client for Microsoft OCS, to provide the features and functionality of the Microsoft Office Communicator on the BlackBerry smartphones. It lets BlackBerry users set their presence status, view the status of their contacts, exchange instant messages (IM) and initiate voice communications with "click to call" – just as they would from the Microsoft desktop client.

Then to unify communications for mobile telephony, Jacobs wanted to trial BlackBerry® Mobile Voice System (BlackBerry MVS), which integrates with First Rate's existing PBX system to handle and route calls in the most effective way. The solution enables a user's desk phone and smartphone to share one number and voice mailbox. Users can access desk phone functions on their smartphones, and callers only have to dial one number, reducing the chances of a critical call being missed.

But as attractive as these features sounded, Jacobs was under pressure to keep costs down. "In the current economic conditions, I had to show that BlackBerry MVS could provide the additional functionality I wanted as well as decrease our operating costs," says Jacobs. After conducting detailed financial analysis, which predicted significant cost savings through lower calling costs, First Rate ran a short trial with a handful of users that confirmed the advantages of BlackBerry MVS features and the forecasted cost savings.

## The Benefits

"Our IT and security departments are very happy with the BlackBerry solution because it is easy to support and they can manage the devices, enforce security policies and wipe the data off them if they go missing. They've got complete control," explains Jacobs. The experience with the BlackBerry solution was so conclusive that today the only mobile devices that First Rate issues for mobile email are BlackBerry smartphones.

The BlackBerry solution with BlackBerry MVS has not only enabled First Rate to deliver truly unified email and voice communications for mobile users, it has also cut mobile phone costs. Because BlackBerry MVS utilises First Rate's existing PBX system to determine the most cost-effective call routing option, First Rate expects to trim the average mobile call costs for a BlackBerry user by over 20%, once the solution is deployed to all BlackBerry users. "BlackBerry MVS will more than pay for itself. It won't cost the business anything to deliver this extra functionality, and it will save us money in the process." The immediate functional benefit of BlackBerry MVS for First Rate is an improved outbound calling experience for BlackBerry users. "They really appreciated being able to use PBX features like dialling by internal extension and call transfer from the BlackBerry smartphone," says Jacobs. "We can manage mobile calling like we manage mobile email, with powerful policies that can be implemented through the BlackBerry Enterprise Server." MVS has also enhanced the "reachability" of mobile employees, improving their responsiveness to colleagues and customers, whether via email or phone.

The BlackBerry solution with BlackBerry MVS has solved First Rate's communications puzzle. "Having a single number was my goal. To deliver it, a BlackBerry solution with BlackBerry MVS was the only route for us. We have a truly unified voice and email communications system for mobile and sedentary workers alike. Now the mobile workspace comes with the same functionalities as the office workspace, thanks to the BlackBerry solution."

**www.blackberry.co.uk/casestudies**

> "Having a single number was my goal. To deliver it, a BlackBerry solution with BlackBerry MVS was the only route for us. We have a truly unified voice and email communications system for mobile and desk based workers alike. Now the mobile workspace comes with the same functionalities as the office workspace, thanks to the BlackBerry solution."
>
> Adam Jacobs
> IT Service Delivery Manager
> at First Rate

**::: BlackBerry®**