

Legal firm takes control of its telephony with Telarus



Company profile

Nicholls Legal is a boutique law firm, based in South Melbourne, Victoria. The practice specialises in the areas of technology, communications, intellectual property, eMedia, commercial and trade practices.

www.nicholls-legal.com.au



A move to new premises prompted Nicholls Legal to keep up-to-date with the latest technology and deploy a state-of-the-art Voice-over-IP phone system.

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The law firm was setting up a new office from scratch, and in keeping with its modus-operandi of staying abreast of cutting-edge technology, the company decided to implement a VoIP phone system.

Matthew Nicholls, Principal of Nicholls Legal, says he did some research on VoIP technology to see what solutions were out there, and decided the Telarus solution was most suitable for his company's needs.

The Solution

Telarus installed a VoIP solution based on a Zultys MX30 – which Nicholls describes as the brains of the system – with half a dozen handsets and some softphone licences.

The MX30 is fast becoming recognised as an essential tool that provides integrated communications for small business users, integrating the functions of many devices into a single box and making VoIP a simple proposition for businesses.

The product takes advantage of industry standard protocols, enabling it to integrate with phones, gateways and devices from other manufacturers. It also includes a powerful desktop client interface that can be used to handle calls and faxes, view presence information and even doubles as a softphone.

“We actually use the softphone facility quite a bit,” says Nicholls. “Basically, the same phone system runs on the computer instead of a handset.

“I don't use a handset anymore at all. I just talk on the softphone, via the computer, with a headset – it's a fantastic feature that I never knew was possible.”

Nicholls says he's trying to get everyone in the law firm to use softphones. “It's the convenience I like. You still pay a licence fee for the softphone, albeit the cost is less than using physical phones, but it's not so much about the cost savings. It's about ease of use and practicality. That's what I like,” he says.

He says it took a few days to get the new VoIP phone system installed and running because the new office required a fair amount of cabling work. But once that was done, it was a smooth transition for staff to begin using it.

“I knew what VoIP was, but I hadn't actually used it before. To be honest, I was pretty sceptical about the benefits that the technology would provide to our business. But so far I have been pleasantly surprised.

“Telarus did some fairly high-level training with us on setup, and that was pretty much all we needed. We've hit the ground running very quickly and I was very happy about how easy our new VoIP system is to use,” says Nicholls.

CASE STUDY: NICHOLLS LEGAL

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THE ROLLOUT

- VoIP system based on the Zultys MX30
- MX30 is a box that provides integrated communications for small businesses
- 6 handsets and one softphone license
- All deployed and managed by Telarus

KEY BENEFITS

- Staff at Nicholls Legal can fully configure the solution to suit their own requirements
- Full voicemail and automated attendant, allowing Nicholls Legal to control the way calls are managed
- Staff are able to set up new extensions as required
- Softphone facility allows users to make calls using their PCs or notebooks rather than a handset
- Feature-rich solution that is reliable and easy-to-use

The Benefits

Some of the compelling things about the new VoIP phone system for Nicholls, is that the firm can fully configure the solution themselves.

“We can change configurations at any time without needing to call someone in. We’ve got full voicemail, and we can set up our own automated attendant so the phone gets answered in the way we want it to get answered. We can – on our own – fully control the way calls are managed internally (e.g. who they are directed to and why) and are able to set up new extensions as required,” Nicholls says.

He says one distinguishing feature of Zultys solution from Telarus, from his point of view, is the softphone. “It just means you can sit here with the headset, and all calls are managed via the computer. You’ve got full functionality, including the ability to transfer calls, forward voicemails to other staff and manage multiple calls at once via your computer. I just find it a lot more convenient, and now I don’t have to have a handset on my desk,” he says.

From the point of view of the legal firm’s customers, Nicholls says the fact that they are using a VoIP system is not an issue. “They wouldn’t know whether we’re using VoIP or a regular analogue system.”

The firm is planning to further capitalise on their investment in a VoIP phone system from Telarus. “The other option we’re going to deploy soon is the ability to extend the capabilities of our VoIP phone system to other sites using a Telarus VPN solution,” Nicholls says.

This will give Nicholls Legal the ability to seamlessly link to remote offices, and enable its lawyers to take their extension with them when working remotely – maintaining full access to all of the features offered by the new VoIP phone system. “It makes Nicholls Legal’s work practices more flexible and means clients have better access to lawyers,” he says.

Feedback

The capital outlay on the new VoIP phone system and the call savings offered by Telarus were important to the law firm, but Nicholls says it wasn’t the deciding factor that prompted the move to VoIP. “It’s more the functionality of the system and the fact that VoIP is the direction everyone’s heading,” he says.

“I haven’t actually worked out the return on investment yet. We had to set up a new system in the new office from scratch anyway. But, while I’m not sure how long the payback period may be (on the phone system), I know I’m getting great functionality out of it,” he says.

Nicholls says he had heard some “pretty bad stories” in the telecommunications industry about VoIP implementations gone wrong – companies being without their phone system for long periods of time because people couldn’t figure out what was wrong.

“But Telarus was outstanding in coming onsite and getting straight to the bottom of any setup issues and resolving them. We’ve got our own dedicated account manager and he’s very attentive to our needs,” he says.

Nicholls says one of Telarus’ strengths is that the company is very good at making sure they understand how a new VoIP system needs to work for each individual company.

“Being a legal firm, we needed the system to work in a particular way, and Telarus has been very good at understanding how to integrate the system to suit the needs of our business.

“We specialise in telecommunications, so it wouldn’t do not to have a good quality phone system. It was very important for me to have a system that reflects well on the area we specialise in, and this does,” Nicholls says.