

Computer Telephone Integration

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Are your computer and telephone systems integrated?

If not - you may be missing out on some real business advantages. Our E-Business Advisers discuss how your firm could benefit:

1. What is Computer Telephone Integration?

If you integrated your telephone and computer systems, it's possible that your firm could save operating costs, improve business efficiency, and even open up new business opportunities.

Computer Telephone Integration (CTI) is the technique of coordinating the actions of telephone and computer systems.

First developed during the 1980s, it was originally utilised particularly in call centres - the volume of calls justified the cost.

Due to advances since the 1980's, CTI has moved into the mass market, with advanced solutions available for smaller firms, at a reasonable cost.

2. What can CTI do?

There are several benefits to Computer Telephone Integration:

- It makes the administration of your telephone network system very straightforward, via a separate computer. You can also install

software on each users PC that provides a simple screen-based alternative to the standard facilities of the latest telephones.

Users can easily:

- make/ answer / hold / transfer calls
 - set up conference calls
 - pick up calls from another extension
 - initiate calls by name from a personal directory (or bar calls)
 - identify the caller on-screen
- You can tie together your telephone system with your Customer Relationship Management (CRM) applications. (See "Client Relationship Management" Fact Sheet in this series.)
- For example, when a customer calls, you could use "screen popping" technology - the caller number is identified at the time of the call, the CRM system then "pops" the full client record onto the operators screen, improving customer service.
- It is also possible to use the computer network to transport voice and fax communications.

You could also utilise Voice over Internet Protocol telephone calls, tied in with your computer network. (See "Voice over Internet Protocol - VoIP" Fact Sheet in this series).

This brings benefits both in terms of shared data and voice calls, as well as considerable savings on call costs.



Fact Sheet

3. Useful Links

See “Client Relationship Management” & Voice over Internet Protocol - VoIP” Fact Sheets in this series.

www.telecomsAdvice.org.uk - Independent web site offering telecoms advice to small & medium sized businesses.