



A winning bid with the Avaya™ IP Office Solution

To support its business – and particularly the new Phone Bidding service it provides to online auction company eBay® – Germany messaging specialists mediaBEAM turned to a reliable Avaya™ IP Office system.

Converged Voice and Data Networks
Customer Relationship Management
Unified Communication

Supported by:
Avaya Labs and Services

Industry:
Online services

Challenge:
Deliver an outstandingly reliable communications platform for a specialist web services provider

Solution:
Avaya IP Office

The mediaBEAM challenge

Few online concepts have proved as successful as the auction site. The possibility of bidding for bargains and bizarre goods has become almost addictive for many users. Indeed, some devotees are tempted to mould their entire lifestyle around the closing minutes of an auction: they need to make sure they are at the computer for the feverish conclusion – and to make sure they aren't outbid.

Nowhere has this concept been more successful than in Germany. Leading auction site, eBay, has more than 5 million customers across the country, many of whom are regular site users. But with this increasing popularity came an increasing problem – more people wanting to join in the auctions at times when they are on the road or on the beach, for instance: in short, people unable to be online.

It was in the face of this very problem that unified communications pioneers mediaBEAM proposed "Phone Bidding", a solution that would enable devotees to participate in the auctions using their telephones. Users that tick the box on the website are called a few minutes before the auction is due to end, informed of the current highest bid and given the opportunity to enter a higher bid on their telephone touchpads. Within a matter of weeks, some 20,000 eBay enthusiasts had signed up for the service, and were happily paying 1 euro a minute to stay in touch with developments.

This kind of integration of telephone and Internet is an area in which mediaBEAM has an outstanding track record. In Germany, over 200,000 subscribers use directBOX, mediaBEAM's free online messaging service. What differentiates directBOX from more

conventional online email packages is that it incorporates voice, SMS text messaging and fax into a single inbox, accessible through the web.

To support directBOX, Phone Bidding and mediaBEAM's other unified communications solutions, the company needs an outstanding telephony platform – a fact that Frank Beckert, Finance and Marketing Director of mediaBEAM, readily recognises.

"If a service is unavailable, we don't just lose money; our brand image and reputation suffer too. And in this business, reputation really matters. If people can't trust Phone Bidding, for instance, then they simply won't use it."

The Avaya solution

An Avaya IP Office system plays an integral part in delivering the reliable, effective service that mediaBEAM requires. It works as both the main office telephony system, and helps to ensure that Phone Bidding can operate profitably within its tight margins.

The majority of calls made to inform customers that the auction is reaching its conclusion are – unsurprisingly – to mobiles. Clearly, making all of these calls – often at premium rate times – could end up highly expensive for mediaBEAM. To solve this problem, the company has installed a range of Primary Rate Multiplexers, connecting mediaBEAM to all the different mobile operator networks as cost-effectively as possible. The IP Office system sends the outgoing calls to the relevant Primary Rate Multiplexer, thus ensuring mediaBEAM benefits from least-cost routing at all times.





The solution at a glance

- Avaya IP Office 412
- Avaya 2030 and 2050 handsets.

This connection is seamless. In the words of Jochen Meyer, Product Development Director, "it's almost as if we don't even know the Avaya solution is there: it simply does the job, 100% of the time."

The IP functionality is seen as something for the future as far as Phone Bidding is concerned, but it is already proving its value internally. "We wanted to be able to increase the synchronisation between our telephone and data networks," Jochen explains. "For instance, with TAPI integration and IP Office's reporting capabilities, we can generate increased management information about telephone usage. It also helps individual users, not only in terms of workstation integration but also providing increased remote access support."

Such IP capability was very much on the shopping list for mediaBEAM, but Jochen had no specific plans to install a pure IP solution. However, when it came to analysing the different options available, Avaya put in, by some distance, the winning bid. Avaya's responsiveness impressed him immediately, and the quality of the IP Office system shone through. "One thing we definitely needed was a modular, scalable system: we needed to be able to add more capacity as our needs increased. The IP Office enabled us to do that. We now have the IP Office 412, the largest system, but our upgrade path from there is also clear."

A further selling point for Jochen was the simplicity of IP Office from the administrative perspective. "You don't need to be a specialist to work with it: we can modify configurations using just an ordinary PC."

About mediaBEAM

Formed in 1999, mediaBEAM GmbH is based in Ahaus/Germany and develops software for Unified Messaging solutions, such as the award-winning directBOX. At www.directbox.com there are approx. 200,000 active users registered.

About Avaya

Avaya enables businesses to achieve superior results by designing, building and managing their communications networks. More than one million businesses worldwide, including 90 percent of The FORTUNE 500®, rely on Avaya solutions and services to enhance value, improve productivity and gain competitive advantage.

Focused on enterprises large to small, Avaya is a world leader in secure and reliable IP telephony systems, communications software applications and full life-cycle services. Driving the convergence of voice and data communications with business applications – and distinguished by comprehensive worldwide services – Avaya helps customers leverage existing and new networks to unlock value and enhance business performance.

To learn how Avaya can help you visit:
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