



CASE STUDY

# Marks & Spencer breaks through barriers to smarter working

Avanade helps major retailer gain an agile edge  
with Skype for Business and Microsoft Cloud PBX

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*“Avanade was not our cheapest option, but you get what you pay for. They have a real passion for their projects and truly deliver.”*

-Steven Collier, lead technical architect, Marks & Spencer

## Background

Marks and Spencer plc (M&S) is a major British multinational retailer. M&S specializes in selling clothing, high-quality food and products for the home. Founded in 1884, it's one of Britain's leading retailers with a highly respected brand and has over 1,400 stores across the world and online.

M&S embarked on a company-wide “Smarter Working” program, which seeks to make its workplace culture more flexible and efficient. Revolutionizing real-time communications through Skype for Business is a major enabler for the program and key to its success.

## Situation: Seeking the next breakthrough in flexibility and productivity

M&S has been one of the early implementers of Microsoft Office 365. Although basic functionalities of Skype for Business, such as instant messaging and peer-to-peer calling were available, usage was relatively low. The recent launch of Microsoft's Cloud PBX (E5 plan) gave M&S the opportunity to extend its use of the Office 365 platform to real-time communications using Skype.

Use of the existing fixed-line telephony estate was limited — and, on average, each extension was only being used to call another extension for less than a minute a day. Most users relied on mobile phones as the default mode of communication, which led to high costs. In addition, M&S was incurring additional costs for a third-party conference calling system. In summary, the under-used legacy estate was costing a small fortune to maintain.

This wasn't just an exercise in refreshing technology or reducing costs. Smarter Working sought to dramatically transform ways of working at M&S and encourage collaboration across business units and countries. To bring this to life, M&S needed to equip its users with the right tools and training to allow them to work where their job demanded, without being tied to a desk.

To achieve this, M&S sought a partner who:

- Leads with a people-first approach, focusing on change management and user adoption to engage users and deliver the benefits set out in the business case
- Delivers with speed and agility — in weeks, rather than months
- Has a track record of managing complex Skype for Business rollouts at scale
- Is proficient and has the right level of specialist skills to implement Cloud PBX — a product that was less than a year-old at the time

## Solution: Roll out custom Skype for Business change program

M&S chose Avanade, and Avanade delivered. Cloud PBX was introduced, providing true unified communications to M&S for the first time.

Avanade first reviewed the telephony architecture and recommended a couple of key design principles that would drive simplicity, speed and an overall lower total cost of ownership. This required a level of change, and Avanade helped the M&S project team secure buy-in from the business by laying out the pros and cons of each option.

Having put in place a clear future-state design, the team built a dynamic business change plan tailored specifically to M&S. As driving adoption was essential, Avanade focused on three key pillars of activity — preparing, executing and reinforcing change for the nine user personas built for this project. Our actions included:

- Developing use cases and extensively promoting the collaboration, improved communication and other Skype for Business benefits to end users
- Creating a training plan that enabled users to embrace Skype for Business, with over 100 training sessions, customized for key functions and departments
- Producing over 20 user guides focused on specific use cases, including how to schedule meetings, make and receive calls, and work effectively in remote environments
- Providing on-site support at launch to end-users, helping them make their own personal transition to new ways of working with Skype for Business

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### Results: A more collaborative, agile and productive M&S

Nearly 5,000 employees are now able to make and receive external calls using Skype for Business in any location, on their preferred device.

Some of the significant commercial benefits M&S experienced included:

- The removal of the existing phone system and all the desk phones attached to it
- Rationalizing the multiple conference-call vendors down to one — Skype for Business
- Radically simplifying and reducing the cost of office moves

The largest benefits have been associated with workplace transformation:

- Nearly 5,000 employees can work anywhere, on any device.
- A step change in collaboration and information sharing, with dramatic increases in conference calls and instant messaging.
- M&S users are delighted with the results.

Here is what some M&S employees have to say about how the unified communications is changing their lives:

- “Screen sharing is brilliant and has transformed how we work,” said a women’s clothing designer.
- “Simple to set up and run conference calls. Good to have the easy link with Microsoft Outlook,” explained a property consultant.
- “You should have taken our desk phones away a long time ago,” commented a property manager.
- “Clarity of calls is excellent, especially when using a headset,” said a supply chain consultant.

### About Marks & Spencer plc

Marks & Spencer plc is one of the UK’s leading retailers. Founded in 1864 M&S is one of Britain’s most trusted and respected high-street brands. They are committed to making every moment special for their customers, through their high quality, own-brand Food, Clothing & Home products offered in their 1,433 stores worldwide and online.



#### About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud-enabling services, business solutions and design-led experiences, delivered through the power of people and the Microsoft ecosystem. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation and has 30,000 professionals in 24 countries. Visit us at [www.avanade.com](http://www.avanade.com)

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