



Future-proofing a mobile workforce with Lumia

Avios case study



With colleagues working across the globe, Avios needed a smartphone solution to increase the connectivity of its mobile workforce. They were early adopters of BlackBerry and trialled the iPhone 5, but didn't feel that either was right. So they put Lumia to the test, and here's how it performed

Background

Avios Group Limited (AGL) operates the global Avios currency for the British Airways Executive Club, Iberia Plus and Meridiana frequent-flyer programmes; as well as the Avios Travel Rewards Programme in the UK and South Africa. It is part of the International Airlines Group. Millions of members collect Avios in over 220 countries worldwide and Avios work internationally with over 250 consumer brands to help turn everyday spending into great rewards.

Of the 750 UK-based Avios staff, up to 200 need devices that support mobile working, both in the UK and further afield.

A solution for today and tomorrow

Avios needed a new smartphone solution to increase the connectivity of the mobile workforce. Dave Fearn, Head of IT Operations, Avios, had been keeping a close eye on the market and reviewing his options for the last couple of years.

"The market was changing so quickly, and I didn't want to put in a technology that I'd need to refresh two years later," explains Dave Fearn. Managing costs was also key, "I hold the budget for the phone bill, so providing the team with tools that are state of the art and that will prove cost effective is important to me too."

Avios were early adopters of BlackBerry, and trialled the iPhone 5, but didn't feel that either provided the right solution for the future. Dave Fearn turned to his trusted solutions provider, OneCom, for advice, "[They] recommended the Lumia devices and I'm very pleased they did."

Putting Lumia to the test

Avios took part in a one-month trial of three Lumia devices that allowed them to experience Lumia first hand. Dave Fearn personally trialled the Lumia 635. What were his first impressions "It's feature rich. It surprised me. A quantum leap ahead of where we were with the BlackBerry."

The first feature he praises is the large screen, identifying how it would make it easy for mobile workers to access and edit work on the move. "I don't know if you've tried to download an Excel document on a BlackBerry but, it is difficult," he says.

The clear reception is another aspect of the phone Dave Fearn rates, "I can always tell when someone is talking to me on a Lumia."

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According to Dave Fearn, "You can tell that a lot of thought has gone into the applications." HERE Drive+ is one of his favourites. "It's free, it updates itself and you can tailor it for the UK or European market. It's a superb application."

He places high value on the long battery life and in the battery saver application. "It gives people a warning before the thing dies out and will shut down certain applications to save battery life." Data Sense is another important tool to Avios, "We've programmed in our allowances, and Data Sense will notify people if they are using the devices incorrectly, which will increase our efficiency."

Switching to Lumia

Dave Fearn was very impressed by his Lumia trial phone. It convinced him that Lumia was the best solution for Avios. He wrote the business plan and, a few months later, he moved all of the 200 Avios mobile staff over to the Lumia 635.

The switch was supported by training days run by Microsoft. The IT team was impressed when the trainer used his Lumia to beam a presentation effortlessly onto a TV screen. They immediately realised the benefits that wireless mobile presentations could bring to their organisation.

Cutting costs not corners

Though it's still early days, Lumia devices have gone down well so far. Dave Fearn is confident that "The more they use the device, the more they'll get out of it. There are lots of new features that people are still finding. I only came across Word Flow the other day, a great feature. When people say, 'I miss the old keys,' I say, 'Well, you can type ten times quicker now if you use Word Flow.'"

What is definitely proven is the considerable return on investment for Avios. "We've been able to get rid of forty 3G dongles, which saves £5,000 a year and we no longer have any usage fees attached to BlackBerry, which saves £15,000 a year. In less than three months we've managed to reduce costs by a third."



Everything's possible

Lumia has helped Avios' teams to be more efficient and effective. According to Dave Fearn, "Lumia has helped us to slice costs for teams as well as keep in touch and check those important documents while out and about."

The new phones have also enabled Avios employees to do lots more. As Dave Fearn summarises, "If a member of staff comes to me and asks if they can do something on their phone, the answer is nearly always going to be 'Yes.' I know when I get requests, now and in the future, that the answer is going to be 'Yes we can!'"

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