

Howard Kennedy

How This Top UK Law Firm Is Using RingCentral and Direct Routing into Microsoft Teams to Consolidate their Business Communications

INDUSTRY | LEGAL



HOWARD
KENNEDY

Size

400 Employees

Website

howardkennedy.com

Headquarters

London, UK

“RingCentral took us from having to support seven communication platforms—none integrated with the others—to one unified communications platform for everything.”

Jonathan Freedman

Chief Information Security & Technology Officer

7

DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS THAT
RINGCENTRAL HELPED CONSOLIDATE
INTO ONE PLATFORM

99.999%

RINGCENTRAL'S INDUSTRY-LEADING
UPTIME SLA FOR CUSTOMERS

400

EMPLOYEES TRANSITIONED TO
REMOTE WORKING.

A trusted UK legal advocate for 100 years

Howard Kennedy's history as a trusted provider of legal services in England dates back a century. With such long experience, the firm has built up one of the industry's most wide-ranging practices. Today, Howard Kennedy offers expertise in everything from real estate and corporate law, to dispute resolution, to family services, to entertainment legal counsel. The firm is even a highly regarded expert at recovering stolen art.

Nor is Howard Kennedy's expertise limited to the United Kingdom. The firm serves many international clients and advises on projects all over the world—including China, India, North America, the Middle East, and Africa.

In recent years, the firm has gone through a rapid expansion phase, including a merger and growing its staff to over 400. In 2015 Howard Kennedy moved its headquarters to the prestigious No. 1 London Bridge building.

During this period of significant growth, one of the firm's operational priorities has been to create a more mobile, agile working environment. However, an on-premises telephony system proved a major obstacle to achieving that objective.

“When we thought through all of our telephony expenses... maintaining the on-prem system, SIP trunks, backup service, plus separate services for fax and conferencing... we saw that RingCentral would be highly cost-effective.”

Jonathan Freedman

Chief Information Security & Technology Officer

A legacy telephony system ready to be repealed

For more than 20 years, Howard Kennedy's telephone infrastructure consisted of an in-house PBX, desk phones, and landlines. When the firm's senior leadership announced their goal of a more agile work environment, one of the first steps the technology team took was to add softphones to their existing IP telephony platform.

However, Jonathan Freedman, Howard Kennedy's Head of Technology & Security, explains that this upgrade didn't fully solve the firm's mobility constraints—and even created some operational challenges of its own.

“With the new IP solution calls could be directed to company issued laptops, however, our colleagues still frequently needed to forward their calls to a mobile phone, and this had to be done manually every time to get those calls,” Jonathan says. “Everyone's office number was still tied to their desk phone.”

As Jonathan points out, this introduced new frustrations for colleagues working remotely, visiting clients, or even collaborating with others in another part of the firm's large office.

"People were getting frustrated at having to forward their extensions to different phones so frequently, or to call in to check their voicemails if they forgot," he explains. "Also, for the people who didn't have a company-issued mobile, making an outbound business call required them to expose their personal numbers."

Jonathan's team began looking for a more agile cloud-communications solution. When the pandemic lockdowns went into effect, Howard Kennedy's search for a new communications provider took on a new urgency.

RingCentral's unified solution presents an open-and-shut case

Almost immediately after the lockdowns began, the firm's technology team rolled out Microsoft Teams to give Howard Kennedy's now-100%-remote staff a tool to stay connected with colleagues from home. However, the firm quickly realised that this solution still left many of its pre-existing communication challenges unaddressed.

"We already had different applications and vendors for everything," Jonathan explains. "We still had the on-premises phone and voicemail systems, several apps for video and audio conferencing, a standalone service for fax-to-email, and our company-issued mobile handsets, and now we had a new collaboration tool which brought us up to seven primary communication solutions—none of which were integrated."

So, with the support of new IT Director Tony McKenna, Jonathan and his technology team worked closely with their IT service and solutions partner Bytes to find the right solution for their firm—and the verdict was clear. "Their experience in the market across multiple verticals helped me and my team to conduct a more thorough investigation into the major cloud-communication providers".

"We looked at the leading providers in the industry, and RingCentral presented the strongest overall offering," says Jonathan. "RingCentral Cloud PBX for Teams integrated effortlessly into our Microsoft Teams environment. On top of this, RingCentral had 99.999% availability and a solid reputation for business telephony."

"But what really made the difference for us was that we could finally consolidate all of our communication solutions... audio conferencing, video calls, fax, phone... into one platform that enabled our colleagues to work from anywhere. RingCentral gave us everything we needed in one place."

"RingCentral Cloud PBX for Teams integrated effortlessly into our Microsoft Teams environment. On top of this, RingCentral had 99.999% availability and a solid reputation for business telephony."

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Chief Information Security & Technology Officer

Discovery phase of the new solution reveals even more benefits

Howard Kennedy's senior leadership team is thrilled to see their staff now able to communicate and collaborate with clients and each other from a single, user-friendly platform that works from anywhere. And as Jonathan points out, RingCentral is providing many operational benefits.

"For the first time, our employees are able to use the same number for phone and fax," he explains. "That was huge a win because it makes things so much more convenient for our staff and clients than having to maintain separate numbers."

The firm also now has a highly resilient communications backup solution for the first time. "With RingCentral, we don't need to worry about a problem with a PBX taking down phone service to the whole firm or manual business continuity processes," Jonathan explains. "Even if our Microsoft Teams environment goes down, colleagues can easily switch to the RingCentral apps on their company issued laptops or mobile devices."

But in addition to those benefits, Jonathan and his team are discovering new services available in the RingCentral environment that can provide even more operational advantages. "We've just started implementing RingCentral Rooms in our office meeting spaces," he says.

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