Horizon

A complete
Disaster Recovery solution

Introduction

Now more than ever businesses are looking for flexible and adaptable solutions to face challenging and unexpected situations.

Any number of unfortunate events could happen at any minute and being ready to face these challenges is vital.

While organisations might already have a Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) for their IT services, they too often overlook their ever-so-important voice system.

Having a thorough plan that considers all key networks – including voice – and having the right tools allows businesses to pick up operations quickly and easily after any sort of disruption.

A comprehensive voice DRP ensures that you can keep doing business, and keep your customers happy, no matter what keeps you from opening your office.

Our Horizon Cloud PBX solution is rich with features and functionality that will ensure disaster recovery won't be an issue for your business. Accessed via an easy-to-use web portal, our hosted solution enables you to take exacting control of your telephony and allows you to continue to operate. Overlaying this with our Inbound service and underpinning with our robust connectivity services will help safeguard your organisation from a disaster.

Work from anywhere

Horizon Cloud PBX

If the worst happens, where will my calls go?

The Horizon platform has a number of disaster recovery solutions at both platform and user level.

At platform level, our cloud based PBX is located across four resilient geographical data centres that operate on our fully owned carrier grade network. These data centres are monitored, managed and supported by a large internal network operations centre team 24/7/365.

The platforms are regularly upgraded to ensure you constantly have access to the latest functions and features.

At a user level, if you need to divert calls to other users or a different department, or if you have to close the premises completely, here are some of the Horizon PBX features that can help:

Horizon web interface

Both administrative and end-user moves, adds and changes for all features and functions are accessed by a centrally driven, internet facing portal. This can therefore be accessed by any internet facing device e.g. iPad, smartphone or laptop, all through a simple login.

Call Forward always

Allows a user to redirect all incoming calls to an alternative destination. Users have the option to activate and deactivate this service through dialling a feature access code or configuring the service via their web interface or on the phone or softphone.

Unreachable

If the Horizon platform cannot forward a call to its destination due to a site power outage, access issue etc. then it will automatically forward to a predefined destination. This could be a user's mobile, another site, a voicemail box, an auto-attendant with additional call routing options etc.

Divert calls from the voice portal

This feature allows you to dial in from any mobile or landline phone to activate the Present DR Destination number via voice prompts.

Divert from admin portal

Set call forwarding from the advanced settings menu or set the no answer timer to forward after 0 seconds.

Forward all calls to voicemail

From the admin portal you can send all calls directly to the group's own voicemail box, where there could be a pre-loaded message used only for DR/BC purposes.

Scheduling

Allows you to have an always ready pre-defined business continuity schedule that can be manually applied to a group via the admin portal without the need to amend any normal working schedules.

Announcements

Upload a new mandatory message greeting for callers entering the queue, alerting the caller of a service issue and offer an alternative number to dial or Dial "0 " to leave a voicemail message.

Deactivate the group

Deactivate the group manually on the admin portal - this will send a network busy tone back to the caller indicating there is an issue. If the design is using Inbound this will route the call to the pre-determined destination upon receipt of the busy signal.

Work anywhere, any time

If you need to work from home or another location Horizon has it covered.

Remote office
Provides the ability for the user to define a location potentially outside of the Horizon service, like a home line or mobile, where they can receive and make calls whilst out of the office. This feature works through re-routing incoming calls to the defined destination.

Twinning
All users have access to twinning or simultaneous inbound calling. This enables the user to specify a number of devices that will simultaneously ring when their DDI is called. This could include a mobile phone, so if there is a power outage on site for example, the user's mobile will still ring and can be answered, therefore not missing the call.

PC/Mac Softphone
This desktop client allows user to make and receive calls from their PC or Mac, as well as quickly accessing key settings for their Horizon service. This allows users to work remotely from different locations with access to Wi-Fi.

Mobile Softphone
The smartphone app allows users to make and receive calls on a mobile device, as well as accessing key settings for their service. It provides all the similar functionality as the desktop client. This is an ideal DR bolt-on for users who can work from anywhere with access to Wi-Fi or 4G.

Collaborate
This desktop client allows users to make and receive calls from their PC or Mac, Android or iOS, as well as quickly accessing key settings for their Horizon service. This also offers instant messaging, presence, audio and video conferencing and file sharing, enabling users to work remotely from different locations with access to Wi-Fi or 4G.

You can learn more about how we can help your business here.

Real life scenarios - Vet Practice
Internet outage

Courtney is the area manager of a nationwide vet practice. She is responsible for the management of four vet centres in the south west of the UK.

Whilst working out of the Bristol branch one day – disaster hit. The Bristol practice completely lost all connectivity due to a digger at the end of the road cutting through a pipe in the ground.

All the cloud-based handsets stopped working and reception staff were unable able to take new appointments. Unphased, Courtney had discussed disaster recovery at the point of purchasing her voice solution. The handsets had all been programmed with pre-set destinations, Courtney was safe in the knowledge that all calls into the practice would be diverted in the event of a local internet issue.

The Horizon core network has built-in intelligence to understand when a handset that was working, is no longer on the network. Within six seconds of the internet outage all inbound calls destined for the Bristol vet centre were evenly distributed to a "fail-over" distribution hunt group and calls were delivered to the Bath, Swindon and Exeter sites.

The practices' valuable customer enquiries were all handled effectively, and appointment bookings were back in service, all without the requirement of any human intervention.

Realising this internet issue may take some time to fix, Courtney considered her options to deliver outbound telephony. With a solid 4G signal, three members of staff were able to download the Horizon smartphone app, log in and start calling customers again.
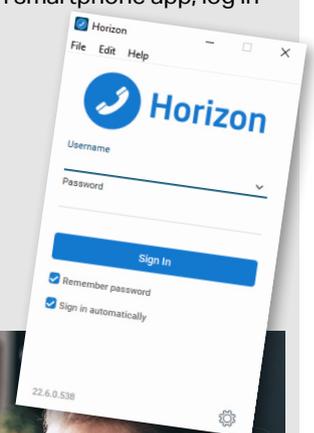
Business-critical numbers and our Inbound solution

Do you know which numbers your company owns and where each of these numbers rings through to when called?

Should the office become inaccessible, an Inbound call management system that is connected to the cloud allows business continuity plans to be activated remotely. Calls are immediately rerouted to alternative teams or departments and the business can have a better degree of control over recovery procedures.
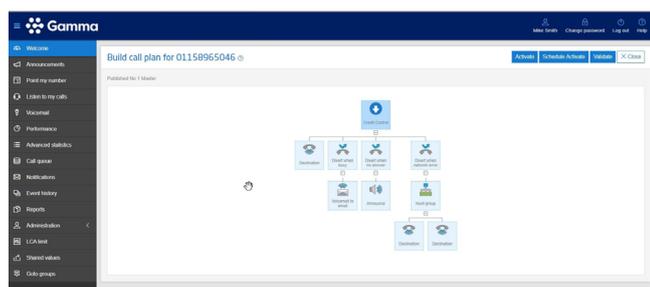
Our in-house, purpose-built Inbound platform offers a full range of call routing capabilities with seamless call handling to Horizon. Together, this dynamic product duo maximises resilience.

The Inbound platform is engineered across two geographically diverse locations in our London and Manchester core data centres in a load share configuration. Each location consists of a collection of resilient high availability servers (e.g. call recording servers, IVR servers, voicemail servers, queuing servers, etc.) and there are no single points of failure.

In the event of service interruption, mainline calls can be rerouted immediately, without the need to rely on network operators. This effectively puts you in control of your business continuity call plans, which can also be remotely activated using the Inbound portal or mobile app.

The contingency plan options include diverting calls, queuing calls, or even playing automated messages to keep your callers updated.

You can learn more about how Inbound can help your business with our Horizon and Inbound Business Continuity Guide.

Real life scenarios
How we can help

Recruitment company
COVID outbreak / home working

Stanley runs a successful recruitment firm with 15 staff. On arriving at work one morning, he received an email from one of his staff confirming they had tested positive for Covid-19. Knowing that he had no option but to close the office and ask all staff to work from home whilst isolating he set his DR plan into action.

Primarily, Stanley accessed his Inbound App to activate the DR call plan for his main inbound customer facing number. This service automatically diverted all inbound customer calls to five nominated company mobiles, allowing all of Stanley's customer and candidates calls to be answered on mobile handsets.

Stanley's second priority was to ensure his team could work from home or another location. As Stanley had a robust DR plan in place, he simply instructed his staff to connect to their home Wi-Fi, and log in to the Horizon Collaborate App on their laptop. These users were able to make and receive all calls as if they were in the office.

Once the majority of the 15 staff were all logged in from home and using Collaborate, Stanley simply reactivated the standard call plan in his Inbound app to start all the inbound calls routing.

Stanley's final challenge was to enable remote working for users that do not have a laptop. Because Stanley selected a cloud-based platform, he had several options available to him. As this team were all smart phone users, the easiest option was for them to utilise the smartphone apps for iOS and Android. In addition to this however, Stanley also had the options to offer mobile twinning for inbound calls, the remote office feature for initiating an outbound call.

Using a true cloud phone system, all Stanley's staff were fully operational from a safe home location, without dropping a single inbound customer call.
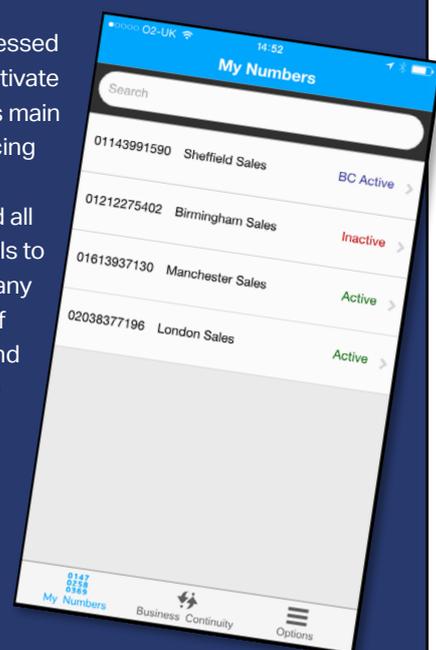
Connectivity

Getting the appropriate level of connectivity for your business

The move to cloud-based applications, including voice and collaboration applications and services, as well as the need to have dependable access to the internet, makes good quality access essential for businesses.

Connectivity between locations and from the organisation to the internet is a business-critical resource. If it fails, work stops. If its performance is sub-standard, work slows, customer and user experience declines, and employees become frustrated. Connectivity should be viewed as being critical to business survival.

From business grade broadband services to FTTC/FTTP, and MPLS solutions for your WAN needs, Gamma provides you with high quality, scalable and managed services, with Quality of Service (QoS) to ensure voice prioritisation. The combination of our network, our IP telephony products and our UK-based support team puts you in control of the connectivity needs of your business. We deliver dedicated, secure, uncontended business-class connections for all your voice and data traffic.

We offer a highly available, managed Next Generation Firewall (NGFW), hosted by us, that protects all access to and from the public Internet: this ensures that users at every site, along with remote workers, receive the same intelligent, up to date protection against external network-based threats.

Gamma core services are compliant with ISO 27001 Information Security and ISO 22301 Business Continuity standards.

We understand however that not every connection suits every business, therefore we have a range of solutions available dependent on your business needs. You can learn more about how we can help your business with our Ethernet and Data Guides.
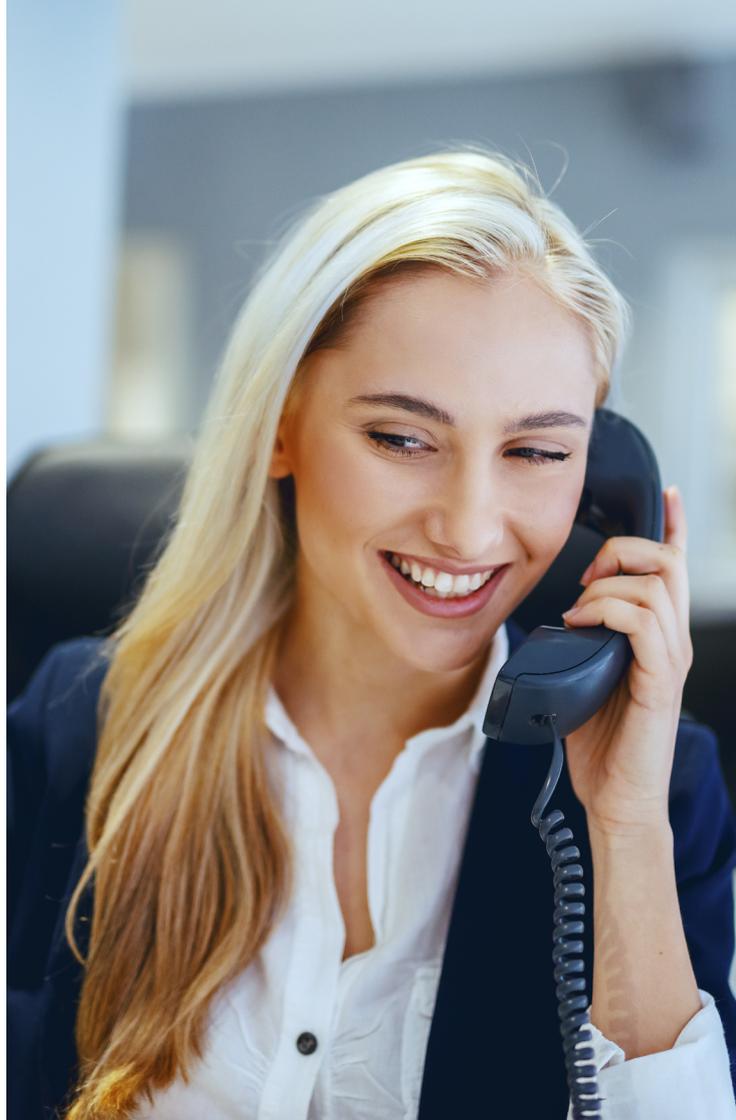
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Work from anywhere