



GasLog: Keeping onshore and offshore staff connected with LoopUp

How a global liquefied natural gas shipping company migrated to Microsoft Teams and implemented cloud telephony across the business with LoopUp

GasLog is the leading global provider of liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipping services. The company is the owner, operator and manager of LNG carriers and provides support to international energy companies as part of their LNG logistics chain. GasLog's fleet consists of 35 LNG vessels and the company has offices in Greece, London, New York and Singapore. With over 1,800 onshore and offshore staff, reliable, flexible technology for internal and external communication is critical to Gaslog.

GasLog moves to on-premises Skype for Business with LoopUp in 2015

Stelios Sabanis is Head of Information Communication Technology (ICT). He is responsible for implementing and maintaining communications solutions across Gaslog's international offices and their vessels. Back in 2015, GasLog was using different telephony providers in each of its offices. This was causing operational complexity and driving up costs. Stelios decided to implement a global unified communications solution that would move all staff onto a consistent platform.

Stelios realized that a project of this scale would require an experienced partner to manage the deployment. "We started our search in Greece, which is where our IT headquarters are, but we couldn't find the expertise there," said Stelios. "We decided to expand our search for the best possible partner. We researched different companies on LinkedIn and asked our local and UK Microsoft Representatives for recommendations. LoopUp was one of the providers that was recommended".

Stelios met with LoopUp's project management team in London for a consultation. LoopUp advised GasLog on the different UC technologies available and suggested Skype for Business was the most suitable to their needs. GasLog selected LoopUp as their partner and Skype for Business as their UC tool. "We were convinced that LoopUp had the best knowledge and infrastructure to support us," explained Stelios.

LoopUp deployed on-premises Skype for Business across all of GasLog's worldwide offices and vessels. "We had great success with LoopUp", said Stelios. "We were able to replace all our voice providers with a single managed service".

GasLog migrates to Microsoft Teams with LoopUp in 2020

After five years of using on-premises Skype for Business, GasLog decided they wanted to move their telephony to the cloud. They were also looking for a tool that could offer them more collaboration functionality such as document sharing and group messaging. GasLog employees already had Teams available as part of their Office 365 license and small pockets of users had begun experimenting with the tool for internal chat or file sharing. "We spoke with the LoopUp team and they were confident that Teams was a perfect fit for us," said Stelios.

Microsoft's Phone System turns Teams into a full enterprise telephony solution. Users can make and receive external calls directly from Teams on any device from anywhere in the world. Teams also offers a more diverse feature-set

than Skype for Business. This includes group messaging, document sharing, file storage and app integration in addition to voice calling, video conferencing, and IM functionality.

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“Adding cloud telephony to Teams would allow our staff to make and receive calls directly from Teams wherever they are in the world,” said Stelios. “This is very important for our offshore staff as they are often travelling for months at a time. They need to be in constant communication with our offices and their families back home, wherever they may be”. Although Microsoft offer their own Calling Plans, Stelios decided to use Direct Routing with LoopUp as the managed service provider. Many larger, international organizations opt for Direct Routing as it offers greater flexibility, wider geographic coverage, lower rates and increased levels of support.

GasLog’s IT department were initially concerned that Teams would not be compatible with their existing Bluetooth headsets. “I was worried that we would need to replace all our headsets and it would be costly,” said Stelios. “But LoopUp assured us that wouldn’t be the case. We trusted the team and they had a wealth of knowledge when it came to Teams migrations”.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck and GasLog office employees were forced to work remotely, Stelios decided the company needed accelerate the migration. “We realized that with all our staff working from home, they need the ability make calls from home on the devices they had available to them”, said Stelios. “We would need a tool that could allow us to collaborate in real-time through voice calling, document sharing, group chat and meetings, and we needed it now. COVID-19 pushed us to migrate to Microsoft Teams quicker”.

The project design phase

The full migration took three weeks. The first part involved a consultation and design phase where each stage in the migration was mapped out. A phased migration needed to be planned carefully as different groups would be moved over at different stages and communication between the two systems, Teams and Skype for Business, would not be

possible. GasLog initially decided to conduct the transition office by office, starting with the Greek headquarters. LoopUp advised against this as the majority of users were based in this office and would be communicating with vessels, vendors and the other offices on a daily basis.

Instead, LoopUp recommended the migration take place on a departmental basis. This would allow the team to focus on a certain subset of users with similar requirements. It would also help overcome challenges with adoption. “This plan allowed us to focus on each department’s needs, be it file sharing or telephony for external client calls, and to ensure any issues were resolved”, said Stelios. “Psychologically it also helped us. People would see their colleagues using Teams and it would encourage them to start using it themselves”.

Testing and deployment

Next, GasLog’s ICT team tested all the functions of Microsoft Teams – meetings, file sharing, cloud voice and calling groups. “We tested everything that could possibly be required by the other teams to make sure there were no problems” explained Stelios.

After a successful testing phase, LoopUp proceeded to deploy Microsoft Teams across each department. Microsoft’s Phone System was connected to the public switched

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telephone network (PSTN) using Direct Routing over LoopUp’s premium voice network. Call transfer, forwarding and voicemail were set up and all existing telephone numbers were migrated over to the Teams environment.

“The migration was so well designed and executed by the LoopUp team,” explained Stelios. “The team were very transparent, so we knew everything that happening in the back end. They were always there to support us. We needed the deployment to take place after office hours and we never had any resistance from LoopUp”.



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Delivering on customer service

The transition proved a success for GasLog and there were no interruptions to the service during roll out. “The plan was quite complex and challenging but LoopUp responded very quickly and were professional at every step,” said Stelios. “They had a great understanding of our company’s requirements and that was the key to success. They really listened to our concerns and recognized our limitations. We had a very good project team that worked with us closely. It was the best customer service I have ever experienced. I can’t find anything negative to say. They delivered what they had to in a perfect way”.

Growing adoption across the business

Once the migration was complete, adoption of Microsoft Teams grew rapidly. “Most people knew how to use many of the Teams features already as they had been using it side by side with Skype for a few months,” explained Stelios. “The only change was the addition of voice calling but everyone has taken to it well. We use Teams voice for every call and our staff are confident using Teams to create new groups, share files or have video calls”.

Providing the network, the expertise and the global reach to support worldwide businesses

With staff based across 35 vessels and five offices globally, constant communication is critical to GasLog. The organization had been using on-premises Skype for

Business for a number of years but due to the COVID-19 pandemic they began searching for a solution that would offer more functionality and connectivity for remote workers. GasLog decided to migrate to Microsoft Teams and implement cloud telephony. LoopUp worked closely with GasLog to deploy Teams across their business, onshore and offshore, and to implement cloud telephony, allowing users to make and receive external calls from Teams on any device, anywhere in the world. This proved critical to the function of the vessel staff and to keep communications open with remote workers during COVID-19. The project was a success and adoption of Teams for internal collaboration and voice calls has been widespread across the business.

“With remote working becoming the new normal, now is a very unique opportunity for companies to start thinking about transitioning to Microsoft Teams and adopting cloud telephony. If you are considering it, make sure you partner with a company that has an excellent track record like LoopUp. They have the voice network, the expertise and the global reach to support worldwide businesses”.

To learn more about how LoopUp can move your business telephony into the cloud with Microsoft Teams, visit loopup.com and **arrange a free consultation.**

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