

## Swindells & Gentry Chooses Philips to Cut Costs and Increase Flexibility

Swindells & Gentry prides itself in offering value for money services in all areas of business and personal finance; Accountancy and Audit, Taxation, Book keeping, Payroll and business development either as stand alone services or as a tailored package even catering for online businesses.

It's a professional practice, which embodies a very efficient combination of personal attention with modern technology and up-to-date expertise. It regards quality and integrity as the most important aspect of their service and their fast and reliable working methods combine timely delivery with expert advice, amounting to high quality service and outstanding value for money.

### PROBLEM

Already an established user of desktop tape-based dictation products, Swindells & Gentry were becoming concerned about costs associated with keeping the ageing equipment serviceable and the lack of a digital compatible system to maintain their commitment to technological advances.

### OBJECTIVE

Faced with the need to replace existing systems, Swindells and Gentry wanted a solution that would stand the test of time and be fully upgradeable.

### APPROACH

After discussing the situation, Philips' advised that the best solution was to go digital. An initial demonstration of Philips SpeechMike™ Executive Dictation and Transcription system was well received, eliminating any concerns and helped staff to understand the considerable productivity gains available and how simple the system was to use.

**Swindells & Gentry is an established firm of Chartered Accountants with clients in East Sussex and beyond.**

**The practice has enjoyed a strong reputation since its foundation in 1925, and is a member of the UK200 Group, a professional association that supports its members with the very latest expertise and technology. The practice has two offices in Uckfield and Seaford.**

### KEY ISSUES

- How to reduce running costs of dictation equipment and improve reliability?
- How to improve work distribution?
- How to provide the process for balancing work priorities?
- How to create a reliable and future-proof solution?



Such was the positive response that Swindells and Gentry set about installing SpeechMike™ Executive dictation for its 12 authors and transcription equipment for its four support staff. The complete digital dictation system was installed and ready to use in just a morning. The digital dictation system now allows all authors' recordings to be stored in a central pool, accessible by both authors and transcriptionists at any time, with each recording given a priority. This has introduced a degree of flexibility, allowing support staff to manage and balance the practice's workload. Whilst a single support person is generally assigned to certain accountants, if there is a lot of high priority work to be done, other support staff can be called upon to assist. This arrangement also works well for holiday and sickness cover.

To offer additional flexibility for accountants who might need to work off-site during an audit or outside of office hours, Swindells and Gentry has also introduced a pool of Philips Digital Pocket Memo®. Using the Philips DPM's download feature, the author can send any recordings and priority information to the transcription pool. Here it will be seen amongst all the other recordings and processed accordingly.

## RESULTS

After some initial hesitancy from the support staff regarding the changes in their working practice, the introduction of the digital system has been received extremely positively.

Support staff especially liked the improved sound quality of recordings. Swindells & Gentry's support staff have now become more proactive in the way they work. All staff can now see the entire transcription pool along with priorities. Even if a piece of dictation is not from one of their assigned authors, they can check to see how urgent the correspondence is, and type it if required.

Authors can also amend correspondence right up to the minute that it is typed, by editing the recording, changing, deleting and adding new information as they interact with their clients, thereby reducing the need for multiple letters to be sent. A unique benefit of the system is collaborative working, whereby a number of accountants can contribute to a single dictation covering their specialist areas, thereby adding their expertise in the appropriate section.

The move to digital has created a flexible and continuous system for the typing of correspondence and reports alleviating the end of the day rush as authors deliver their work for transcription. Using the new system has shortened the time it takes to produce a letter and has removed the need to circulate cassettes between authors and support staff.

The benefits of the digital system, and the time and efficiency gains achieved, far out-weigh the costs of implementation. The addition of the Philips Digital Pocket Memo® as a mobile device, has given a greater flexibility to the Swindells and Gentry workforce allowing them to choose when and how they work.

## CONCLUSION

Implementing digital dictation within the organisation has seen the end of tape-based working at Swindells and Gentry, bringing the added benefits of clear recording and flexibility to balance their workloads. The new digital system is proving to be such a success that it is now being considered at Swindells and Gentry's Seaford office, allowing them to work with a totally integrated office dictation environment across the whole practice.

"We now have a system that we can use on a proactive basis. In the past, you would send a tape and wait for the letter to be returned before amending it. That doesn't happen now, you're changing documents in real-time; I use that facility a lot and like the flexibility and time savings that it affords", commented Chris Bendall, Audit and Corporate Accounts Manager, Swindells and Gentry.

## CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Digital dictation provides superior sound quality.
- Efficiency gains through flexible prioritising and work balancing.
- Has increased productivity through using central pool.
- Has unique ability for a number of authors to collaborate on a single recording.

