



# Birmingham City Football Club

## The Client

Originally formed in 1875 as Small Heath Alliance, Birmingham City Football Club has been known as such since 1943. Having been up and down the divisions for many years, they were promoted to the Premier League at the end of the 2008-09 season, winning the League Cup at Wembley in 2011 to qualify for European Competition in the 2011-2012 season.

## The Journey

After spending a number of years away from the top flight, Birmingham City's promotion to the Premier League had greatly increased demand for tickets, merchandise and general customer service. As with any growing business, this had put some extra strain on their infrastructure. The telephone system had been in place for over ten years, and they had decided that it needed updating to accommodate the ever increasing demand;

*"Although we had a good telephone system in place for a number of years, it became obvious, particularly after our latest promotion to the Premiership, that we needed to upgrade the system to cope with the demand and continue to provide a good service to our fans."*

**Steve Pain, Operations Director, Birmingham City FC**

With the Club's policy of always obtaining a minimum of three quotes for any work undertaken, they offered out the contract to a number of different sources, but in the end it came back to CS Comms.

CS Comms had been maintaining the system for the duration, and had an excellent working relationship with the Club for a number of years. As well as being very price competitive, their service levels had been tried, tested and proven, as **Steve Pain** explained;

*"I've always found them to be absolutely excellent in how they deal with us. We rarely have any problems, but if and when we do, I know I can give them a call and there will be an engineer on the case immediately – no messing about!"*

On December 1<sup>st</sup> 2010, CS Comms were awarded the contract and quickly got to work. Birmingham City FC were able to consult with CS Comms about their concerns with the existing system and areas they would like to improve, confident that the expertise in CS Comms' proposals would address all of the issues in the most effective and appropriate way.

## The Challenge

The main challenges for the installation were the complicated nature of the old, original system and the extremely tight timescales available – the Club couldn't afford to have downtime where their loyal fans were unable to get through to speak to them or get match tickets.

The original stadium cabling was a mixture of new structured cabling and older legacy BT cabling – all very functional but complex to reconfigure in a short period of time.



**IT Manager Shawn Baldock** explained;

*“Obviously a working environment such as a football club cannot be without any form of communication for very long, but telephony is paramount.*

*We had a lot of old cabling in place that we wanted to replace without disruption to the current Telrad telephone system. Also, training was a little daunting as there are so many users working in different departments.”*

After their proposal had been agreed, CS Comms looked at the Club’s fixture list and it was agreed that the weekend of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of December was the most appropriate date as the team were playing an away fixture, and preparation work began on the 7<sup>th</sup> – 6 days after the contract was awarded.

### **The Solution**

As a supplier of telecommunications solutions to a large number of Midlands-based organisations, CS Comms were able to quickly identify the best way to get Birmingham City FC to where they wanted to be. The two parties agreed to install a new Toshiba telephone system.

CS Comms set about installing all of the new cabling on the 7<sup>th</sup> December, creating contingency lines for fans and customers alike to still have phone access to the Club, while switching off the main existing system at 12pm on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December.

### **The Results**

CS Comms provided a solution that allowed all of the new telephone system extensions to be delivered on to the new structured cabling to make management easier, but also link in to the old legacy cabling still used on site.

The new system was up and running well in advance of expectations – in fact within half an hour of switching off the old one! The whole job was completed seamlessly and with minimal loss of service.

CS Comms’ engineers were on hand on the Monday to ‘babysit’ the new system and complete staff training during the course of the day. The Club were delighted with the CS Comms installation;

*“The project went very well . . . The disruptions were minimal with the downing of the old system to the new system taking over was no more than an hour when calls were being received into the reception.*

*The whole project got a resounding thumbs up from Directors, Management and end users.”*

**Shawn Baldock, IT Manager, Birmingham City FC**



*“They did all of the cabling and preparation prior to the weekend, then completed the switchover with a remarkably short downtime AND they put in contingencies so that customers could still get through to us. In addition they had engineers on hand for the first few days of the new system’s usage to answer any queries while we got used to it – it was excellent!*

*I’d have absolutely no problem at all in recommending CS Comms to any other company looking at their phone systems – I have always found that they provide a very good service – they are very fast to respond and very, very reliable.”*

**Steve Pain, Operations Director, Birmingham City FC**

If you would like to find out more about what CS Comms can offer your organisation, why not visit our website at [www.cscomms.co.uk](http://www.cscomms.co.uk), or alternatively drop us an email at [sales@cscomms.co.uk](mailto:sales@cscomms.co.uk) or call us on **0845 677 1000**, where we would be happy to answer any of your telecoms queries.