



## Cloud-based agility for global gases and services company

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Renay Merdan  
Customer Service Manager  
Air Products Medical GmbH

### Air Products has chosen BT NGCC as its global contact centre platform for new projects or when existing solutions reach end of life

#### Challenge

Serving customers globally, Air Products offers a unique portfolio of gases, performance materials, and equipment and services. What makes Air Products stand out from the competition is its focus on service excellence. That’s never truer than in the Air Products Medical division, which helps improve the quality of life of some 325,000 respiratory patients worldwide.

In fact in Germany alone, at any one time the Air Products Medical team supports around 27,000 patients. For maximum efficiency, once diagnosis is complete and care is prescribed by a healthcare professional, there’s a direct relationship between the patient and Air Products. The latter takes care of the patient throughout the treatment – from training, to equipment installation and servicing, and periodical follow-up calls and visits.

Renay Merdan, Customer Service Manager for Air Products Medical in Germany, explains: “We mainly care for sufferers from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. These are people who, for a number of reasons, can’t breathe properly by themselves. For them we are quite literally a lifeline. Just like the emergency services, when they pick up the phone there must always be someone on the other end to deal with their problem.”

“We have to handle up to 600 calls every day, right around the clock, both from existing patients and from doctors seeking to provide treatment to new patients,” continues Renay Merdan. “A decentralised multi-sited structure with legacy phone systems made it difficult and expensive to meet this demand.” Furthermore, Air Products had no way of actually measuring its service levels or the productivity of its agents.

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### The BT differentiators

- Capital investment and costly network upgrades are unnecessary, while a new NGCC installation can be up and running in as little as four weeks
- Business continuity and business agility benefits are conferred by the virtual and scalable nature of the NGCC platform
- ACD, IVR, and call recording functions are served from the cloud: new hardware is not required, while existing hardware can be integrated into the NGCC solution
- Staff levels can be optimised through centralisation or virtualisation of existing contact centre sites and staff resources

## Case study

# Air Products Medical (Germany)

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Renay Merdan  
Customer Service Manager  
Air Products Medical GmbH

### Solution

As part of a focus on efficiency, Air Products Medical in Germany decided to centralise healthcare customer service into a single building in Bochum. A BT NGCC (next generation contact centre) cloud-based platform was chosen for the new facility.

Renay Merdan says: “We were attracted to the BT NGCC solution because there was no capital expenditure involved in its implementation. Also when it comes to setting up new users and administration of call behaviour it’s very easy for non-technical people to use.” That message chimes with Air Products’ aim to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of its IT and customer service teams by adopting hosted solutions wherever possible.

Accessed over the internet, the BT NGCC service resides across BT data centres in London, New York, and Hong Kong, while a BT data centre in Dublin offers resilience for back-end processing. Should it be necessary, all four data centres are equipped to handle front-end processing, while London can also run back-end services. Connected over the BT global network, this architecture offers unsurpassed levels of availability.

### Offices worldwide

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Processing of call information takes place within the BT “local” data centre. This offers either IP telephony over MPLS or integration with local analogue switching equipment. In either case, once calls enter the NGCC cloud they are routed over the BT network. This means that customers don’t face a costly IP upgrade to their voice networks in order to get NGCC benefits. Central call management ensures that the most efficient route is adopted.

As a hosted service, there is no requirement for automatic call distribution (ACD) and interactive voice response (IVR) boxes. Those sorts of functions are provided within the cloud. No hardware to install means implementation is as simple as uploading the NGCC agent desktop applet onto local PCs. The only other step required by BT was to train Air Products’ employees in the use of the NGCC platform.

At the same time multiple local Air Products Medical telephone numbers were rationalised and replaced by a single national freefone number. Rather than force longstanding customers to redial, the NGCC platform accepts calls from the old local numbers and routes them to the Bochum centralised contact centre. Out of normal office hours the BT NGCC platform routes calls to an outsourced facility.

Due to the nature of the business in which the company operates, call recording is essential evidence for Air Products Medical should there ever be a dispute. That call recording functionality, too, is provided within the cloud. However, the BT-designed IVR logic offers the opportunity to opt out should a patient not wish their call to be recorded. A fast track IVR route is also available for urgent calls.

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## Core BT services

Next generation contact centre (NGCC) solution including ACD, IVR, call routing, and call recording

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**“The BT NGCC cloud-based solution is also being used by other Air Products divisions around the world, enabling them to work as a single virtual entity.”**

Renay Merdan  
Customer Service Manager  
Air Products Medical GmbH

### Value

At the Air Products Medical BT NGCC site in Bochum, eighteen contact centre agents (full time equivalent) are now answering at least 80 per cent of incoming calls in less than one minute. This exceeds the target service level and is a significant improvement compared to the previous decentralised organisation.

Renay Merdan concludes: “The BT NGCC cloud-based solution is also being used by other Air Products divisions around the world, enabling them to work as a single virtual entity.” Rules-based call routing ensures that appropriate account managers or their nominated deputies take particular calls.

The BT NGCC pay-as-you-go charging structure gives newfound business agility to companies. They can much more easily scale customer service operations up or down to match changes in demand, without incurring capital costs. On the same principle new companies can be seamlessly assimilated too. A new BT NGCC installation can be up and running within as little as four weeks from beginning to end.

The cloud-based solution also helps to maintain business continuity: should there ever be a serious emergency at any location, BT NGCC can instantly divert all calls to mobile phones, people’s homes, or disaster recovery sites as appropriate.