



BT helps GAP mind the pennies

As a not-for-profit organisation arranging voluntary placements abroad, GAP Activity Projects has to keep costs low without compromising its need for reliable communications. BT's Business Plan has helped the company do just that.

Established in 1972, GAP Activity Projects (www.gap.org.uk) is a not-for-profit year-out organisation for school leavers. It specialises in voluntary work placements overseas for 17 to 20-year-olds that take place in the transition year between 'A' levels and further education, training or employment.

GAP currently arranges over 1,500 placements annually in 34 countries for volunteers from the UK, plus 550 placements in the UK for volunteers from overseas.

Nicki Ridout, GAP publicity officer, comments: "Things have really taken off in the last 5 to 6 years. Taking a gap-year voluntary placement has become very common for people from all regions and backgrounds."

The most popular placements are in teaching, conservation (including working on the reefs in Australia or the rain forests of Brazil), care-work (such as with orphans or the elderly), and in outdoor education.

"We don't just organise the placement," explains Ridout, "we help volunteers plan and prepare for their stay, we try to always place them in pairs and we support them via GAP Overseas Agents while they're actually out there."

All this requires a great deal of national and international communications. While the company has been a BT customer since its inception, it took the further step of signing up for the Business Plan call package to help tackle call costs.

"We first heard about Business Plan shortly after its launch and immediately signed up," says Ridout. "We basically opted for the Plan because it was the best available deal. Lots of other providers offered us deals on evening and weekend calls, but almost all the 25 people who work here use the phones chiefly during peak times."

BT's Business Plan proved cost-effective not just for peak-time calls but for GAP's overseas communications as well.

Ridout says: "People use the phone and the internet all the time here, plus we make a lot of overseas calls so bills can potentially be a very big cost for us."

She estimates that savings since the implementation of Business Plan are in the region of 8% per quarter which, given the company's high communications load, amounts to a saving of between £500 and £600 a year. "This is a very significant saving for us," comments Ridout.



BT Business Plan Case Study GAP Activity Projects

She cites one-call assistance as another important feature of Business Plan that helped convince GAP it was the right call package for them. He says: “Considering the amount of people we have using the phones, we’ve found this very helpful. It has certainly made things more efficient.”

Finally, she says Business Plan bill analysis has helped GAP make further savings: “As a not-for-profit organisation we have to be very careful about costs such as those involved in communications. They can really add up, so anything that helps us work out ways to make savings is very, very useful.”