



BUSINESS

# Success Story

## And what if the Smurfs' hat was concealing a combo-headset?!

**IMPS**

[smurf.com](http://smurf.com)

**Location:**

Belgium

**Sector:**

Marketing

**Headset Users:**

15

**Challenge:**

To offer an impeccable audio quality during calls with customers and prospective customers, everywhere in the world, under any circumstances

**OVERVIEW**

The acronym IMPS (International Merchandising Promotions & Services) conceals a company whose business is managing Smurfs rights throughout the world. Its mission: to ensure the marketing of those little blue imps through a whole host of bi-products inspired by Peyo's creations.

The company is divided into three operational business units: Publishing, Audio-Visual, Merchandising and Promotion. The Publishing Business Unit manages the rights, an increasingly complex and diverse activity as the little blue fellows conquer each territory of the planet and cavort on screens of every size, from cinemas to mini Smartphone screens via digital tablets. The IMPS Audio-Visual Business Unit has to manage the broadcasting rights of 272 episodes of the cartoon on no less than 120 TV channels worldwide. Not to mention the DVDs and the music. The Merchandising and Promotion Business Unit deals with all the bi-products (clothing, toys, figurines, and so on).

The commercial growth has been much in evidence for several years. "For three years, the company has been enjoying exponential growth", Michael Loosveldt, IMPS Finance Director, stressed. "That has induced us to optimise some of our processes and tools. The telephone was one of those points of improvement because we have to speak, regularly, with people from every part of the globe. In 2011, when we replaced our switchboards and our telephones, we took advantage of the situation by adopting headsets in order to make our employees' work easier for them." The Key Account Managers (who sometimes spend up to a third of their day on the telephone) and the members of the Legal Department were particularly concerned.

**AT STAKE, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CUSTOMER RELATIONS**

The IMPS Key Account Managers are in charge of the network of licensing agents. The conversations that they have with their contacts often oblige them to consult files and/or contracts, to seek information on the previous exchanges with the customer, on the commercial context of the country concerned, and so on. Under such conditions, the

**plantronics.**

Plantronics Solution:  
EncorePro  
CS540  
Voyager PRO UC

"We didn't want an outsider solution. We wanted quality and everyone told us that we would only find it at Plantronics."

manipulation of a handset impairs their efficiency and adversely affects the quality of their answers. So recourse to headsets was in no way superfluous. "Our two main objectives were ease of use and free hands during the calls."

But IMPS soon realised that not all headsets were up to the mark. A first unfortunate experience showed the overwhelming importance of top-quality headsets. "With cheap headsets of another brand, we lost virtually 50% of the thread of the conversation. It's not as though we were listening to music. The voice must be clear, and the conversation has to be audible. We have to be understood, without having to repeat ourselves."

A consultant of Inventive Telecom, the partner who had installed the Avaya systems, then recommended that IMPS should turn to Plantronics. "Conversing for more than an hour with people from all around the globe, whose accents are sometimes difficult to understand, requires us to put every chance of being understood on our side. We found the sound quality that we were looking for with the Plantronics headsets," Michael Loosveldt explained. "These headsets have the additional advantage of filter out interference and background noise, essential in an open-plan environment. They enable us to have our hands free and to be able, during the calls, to calculate, write or send an e-mail directly to the person on the line, to browse through a document, to amend it, to annotate it, and so on. Suppleness, flexibility and quality gave us a win-win situation!"

#### ALL-PURPOSE HEADSETS

The headsets are used by the major telephone users (sales reps and lawyers, but also by other departments such as Finance, Administration and IT.

IMPS CEO, William Auriol, is also convinced. "I'd always been a bit reluctant to use a headset", he confided. "I started by using one for long phone conversations. Thanks to the adaptor, I had connected it to my mobile phone, which I use a lot. It was all so nice that

*I started to use it for fixed-phone conversations as well. It lets me to do two things at the same time. My eyes and hands can go on doing what they were doing without there having to be an inevitable link with the conversation in progress."* Loosveldt adds: "It increases your freedom of thought."

Some headsets, like the Voyager PRO UC V2 come with a Bluetooth adaptor, which enables their users to telephone while driving their cars. These headsets are particularly appreciated for their lightness and their ability to eliminate background noise.

#### OTHER QUALITIES

Apart from the quality of the sound, the main advantages of the Plantronics headsets, according to IMPS, are their lightness, the flexibility of action that they allow and their ease of handling. "There's nothing simpler", William Auriol confirmed. "It's Plug & Play." According to him, the best proof of their worth comes from the fact that none of the IMPS customers or callers has made any criticism or mentioned any problem of sound quality since the headsets have been in use. "No comment, good comment", he said with a smile. And he who was still until recently a little reluctant to wear a headset is now encouraging "all who ask the question to give it a go. And to all who have not yet asked the question, to ask it." In this respect, he is also advising people not to abandon their own perception of things: "When we replaced our telephones, I would never have thought, by myself, of encouraging recourse to headsets. You should above all not hesitate to poll those who are primarily concerned, namely the users", he concluded.

"Conversing with people from all around the globe, whose accents are sometimes difficult to understand, requires us to put every chance of being understood on our side. We found the sound quality that we were looking for with the Plantronics headsets."

**MICHAËL LOOSVELDT,**  
IMPS FINANCE DIRECTOR

#### Benefits

- Consistent-quality audio performance
- Lightweight
- Ease of use
- Versatile (fixed phone, mobile phone, in-car and outdoor use)
- Minimalise background noise