Car firm's call centre moves three miles as more drivers buy vehicles on the phone

MOTORPOINT has moved its call centre from the head office in Derby, its home for 10 years, to a 9,000 sq ft site three miles away.

It houses 45 agents and the call centre general manager, Jon Baird, said this number is likely to rise to 60 this year and a further 10-15 new staff in 2012.

They handle calls for the company's vehicle sales sites in Derby, Burnley, Glasgow, Newport and Peterborough. The call centre will also be a base for the customer services team, the human resources department and for a training school, headed by a newly-appointed training manager, Minty Singh.

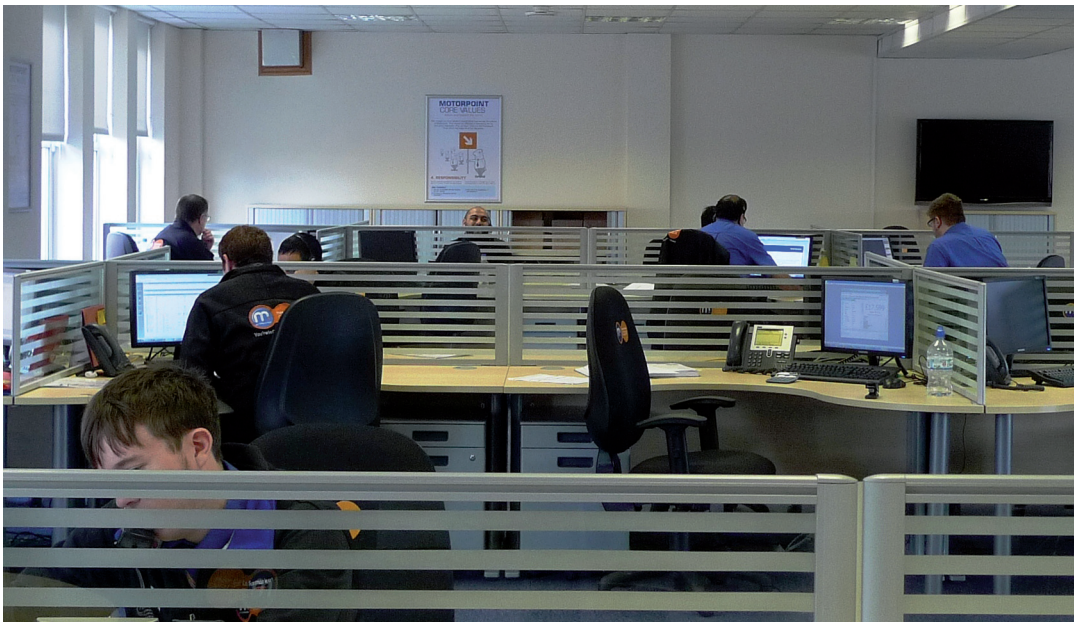
Motorpoint's HQ is in Chartwell Drive, West Meadows Industrial Estate, Derby, and the new call centre occupies a floor of St James House a three-storey office block in Mansfield Road. It was chosen, after looking at a number of locations, because of its easy access for staff and its proximity to HQ.

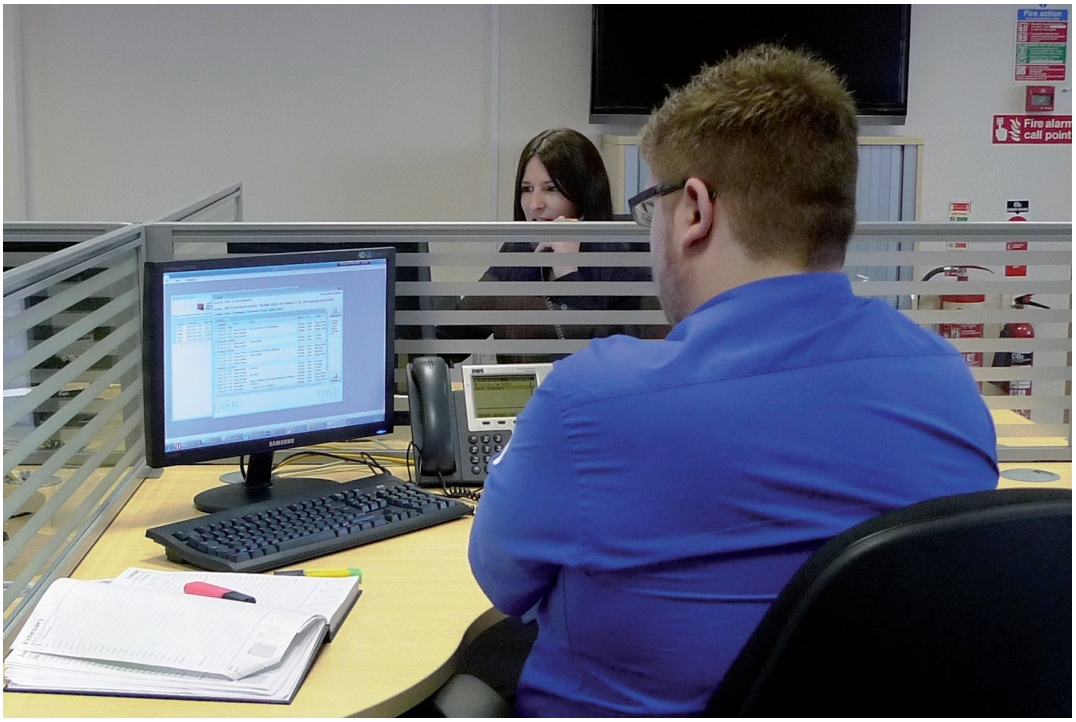
Mr Baird was one of the original members of the call centre team and had previously worked for a Derby-based care dealership. He said: "We opened our call centre at a time when the idea of buying a car over the phone was completely unheard of.

"But technology has moved on considerably since then and today buying a car over the phone has become the norm.

"However, our previous site simply didn't have the facilities to accommodate the team comfortably and after a year of searching for a suitable location, we're delighted to moving to St James House. It's a purpose-built environment, with excellent facilities throughout, plus additional space for new team members as and when required."

Motorpoint said calls were generated by its web site, viewed by about 5m unique visitors per year, which displays all vehicles for sale. Most calls, out of the predicted 70,000 this year, were from the UK, plus Ireland and mainland Europe.





New home: Motorpoint's call centre in Derby

"Buying a car over the phone has become the norm": Jon Baird

A spokesman said: "While car retailers have traditionally looked to drive traffic to their showrooms we anticipated a long time ago that consumers would generally look to do their research off-site online and buy over the telephone and invested in this side of its business. It has paid huge dividends."

Launched in April 1998, Motorpoint says it sells an average of 25 cars a day over the telephone and last year sold 44,000 cars and commercial vehicles, bringing total sales since formation to 70,000 (see Call Centre Europe, issue No. 86, page five).

When recruiting for the cal centre, Mr Baird explained, candidates are interviewed by phone and then twice face to face before an offer is made.

The company looked for people skills and had a history of not recruiting from car dealerships; it preferred those from a wide spectrum of background as this benefited the skills base.

New recruits spend four weeks in training before being allowed to sell cars. There is ongoing "refresher" training and all sales staff must complete online FSA tests each year.

Motorpoint call centre fact file

- **Workstations** 50
- **Agents** 45; 30 inbound, 15 outbound (all full time)
- **Opening hours** weekdays 8am-8pm; Saturday 8.30am-6pm; Sunday 11am-5pm
- **Furniture** Office Essentials
- **Wallboards** made in house
- **CRM software** in house
- **Average call length** inbound 15mins; outbound 10mins