

COLEG GLAN HAFREN COLLEGE +SHORETEL

College replaces its managed voice service with ShoreTel IP to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and improve the caller experience



Challenges:

With four college sites and 600 staff served by an aging and inflexible managed voice system, communications were becoming strained. As the college expanded, moves, adds, and changes were costly; routing calls to the right extension was difficult; and voicemails were lost.

ShoreTel Solution:

The college deployed ShoreTel Voice Switches and ShoreTel IP telephones to consolidate its four sites under a single, reliable, and centrally managed voice network.

ShoreTel Benefits:

- Significant cost savings and efficiency gains
- Greatly improved call handling
- Integration with Microsoft Outlook
- Direct dial from PCs

Aging, inflexible, difficult-to-manage system

The college had an aging voice network of 240 desk phones and Siemens Realitis switches at three campus sites. But the Design Academy was a separate entity with its own BT lines.

Single, reliable, centrally managed solution

Coleg Glan Hafren is Cardiff's largest further-education college. It delivers 800 courses to 13,000 students from its main Trowbridge campus and three further sites around the city, including a plush hair-and-beauty salon called the Design Academy.

"Previous to the ShoreTel deployment, routing calls from Trowbridge to the correct person was tricky," says Gareth Burton, IT manager at Coleg Glan Hafren. "Up to 18 staff members could be sharing one telephone number, and since most teachers are generally unavailable by phone for the majority of the day, voicemails were often lost."

Another headache was the cost of implementing moves, adds, and changes. "Our voice system was provided as a completely managed service via NTL and Siemens, so the IT department didn't have much to do with it," explains Burton. "Anytime we needed to set up, cancel, or reset voicemail, or move somebody around, our managed service provider would charge for sending an engineer – even for a quick job."

The inflexibility of its voice system was exacerbated as the college continued to expand, so the decision was taken to deploy an IP Unified Communications (UC) system.

Burton and his team investigated and drew up a specification for a distributed and scalable system that could serve a large user base of mobile workers and offer integration with Microsoft Outlook® for voicemail notification. Further key requirements included a fully customizable auto attendant with the ability to record bilingual prompts, hunt group-style overflow for incoming calls to main receptions and departmental numbers, call center and softphone capabilities, as well as call logging and reporting.

Nine local resellers were short-listed for six product solutions – Alcatel, Avaya, Cisco, Mitel, ShoreTel, and Siemens. ShoreTel and its reseller partner were clear winners. “Although not the lowest quote initially,” says Burton, “ShoreTel was the only price that remained consistent once we had mapped out the full system requirements.”

ShoreTel makes the grade

The new solution comprised ShoreTel voice switches. These voice switches plug into the LAN via Ethernet, support both IP and analogue phones, and are deployed in an N+1 architecture, so that if a switch fails or is isolated by a network fault, the phones automatically failover to another voice switch at the site. The college also opted for ShoreTel IP telephones. These phones are configured automatically when added to the network.

The ShoreTel IP UC system was deployed within a week and a half, and configured for 600 users and 250 ShoreTel IP Phones. This has since been expanded to include the Design Academy, and a further 40 IP handsets.

ShoreTel passes the management test

This new distributed architecture has enabled the college to replace its multiple PBXs with a single centrally managed system. “Using ShoreTel’s

browser-based ShoreTel Director, the system is extremely easy to manage – probably the easiest of all the products we looked at,” states Burton.

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Gareth Burton, IT Manager
Coleg Glan Hafren

“We can add new users and locations, configure voicemail and essentially do all the things that were done previously by an external engineer,” Burton says. And on the odd occasion when there has been an issue, Burton says the response times have been fantastic. “When a potential fault is detected, system warning messages are automatically routed to our ShoreTel reseller, often before anyone at the college notices.”

The ShoreTel system’s integrated features such as voicemail, automated attendant, and automatic call distribution have enabled the college to realize substantial cost savings and productivity gains. “With the ShoreTel system, our call handling has improved 100%. Auto attendant deals with the majority of incoming traffic, allowing callers to select an extension, dial by name, or by department,” says Burton.

ShoreTel Success Story

Features such as hunt groups and automatic forwarding to mobile numbers ensure that staff can be contacted when needed – allowing the college to use its reception staff more efficiently. Burton says, “During our student enrollment period, a mini call center workgroup was set up, enabling us to handle some 30,000 calls over a month and a half. Previously, we had to employ temps or pull our staff away from other duties.”

Flexibility has been another big plus. With the ShoreTel IP UC system, any staff member can login to a phone using his or her personal extension to make a call or access voicemail. And with ShoreTel Personal Call Manager, which can be integrated with Microsoft Outlook, voicemail notifications are delivered direct to the user's inbox.

Furthermore, the college has incorporated the ShoreTel system directory into its desktop Web application, enabling users to search for contacts and dial direct from their PCs.

ShoreTel inspires innovative solutions

The ShoreTel system has also led to some unexpected benefits. The college uses a swipe-card access control system for its car parks, and by plugging the internal modems directly into its IP network, found that it can operate the car park barriers remotely by dialing them, as well as running the intercom over the network.

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Even the fashion-conscious of Cardiff are benefiting. With the Design Academy now linked in, customers can call the college directly to book their appointments and avoid any bad-hair days that might result from an unanswered call or erroneous voicemail.

ShoreTel. Brilliantly simple business communications.

ShoreTel, Inc. (NASDAQ: SHOR) is a leading provider of brilliantly simple IP phone systems and unified communications solutions powering today's always-on workforce. Its flexible communications solutions for on-premises, cloud and hybrid environments eliminate complexity, reduce costs and improve productivity.

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