Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy
Case Study

SpliceCom

Britain's leading developer of telephone systems

Background

Located in the Darley Abbey district of Derby, Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy is the only Catholic secondary school in the area. It educates over 1,400 students and employees more than 100 teachers, in addition to non-teaching support staff and 'one to one' tutors.

Having utilised two existing NEC Aspire PBXs as the basis for their telephone system for well over ten years, the Academy desperately needed to replace it. They were having more and more intermittent faults on the system, spares were becoming hard to find and with the system at full capacity no expansion was possible. In addition, because the NEC Aspire system was out of manufacture replacement handsets were also becoming scarce.

The Drivers For Change

The Academy's ICT Manager, Michael Hilton, takes up the story. "Having recognised that our existing system was fast approaching the end of its effective life we put together a list of key requirements for a new system before we started scouring the market. Top of that list was the need to consolidate our two existing systems into one to simplify daily management tasks, alongside an investigation into ways of reducing call charges and line rentals by moving away from the traditional ISDN30 circuits to SIP. In addition we wanted to explore how the features delivered through modern telephone handsets could make our working lives easier. The telephony functionality delivered across the Academy was very limited due to the huge level of disparity between the analogue, digital and IP handsets we had deployed, with the vast majority being analogue handsets with very basic functionality."

Scouring The Market

Having put their key requirements list together the next step was the evaluation of prospective solutions. In the end, the Academy received proposals from the incumbent NEC, alongside Avaya, Mitel, Samsung and SpliceCom. "The selection process itself turned into quite a significant project," continued Hilton. "We certainly combed the marketplace."

In the end, the decision to choose SpliceCom was very straightforward. "It offered the best integration of software and hardware," explained Michael Hilton. The Navigate desktop software for our Windows PCs, alongside the web based Vision wallboards and historical reports offered greater added value than the other manufacturers. The IP handsets are also well designed, with consistent operation across the entire range."

Installation

With a smooth, well-planned install handled by the local SpliceCom Community Partner, Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy is now enjoying the benefits of their SpliceCom telephone system. With around 110 extensions connected to a single Maximiser OS based hard PBX the rollout is almost complete subject to some minor handsets changes and the addition of a couple of additional handsets.

Obvious Benefits

And how's the new system been received? "It's improved staff productivity across the site and enhanced our customer service," reports Michael Hilton. "Missed calls, call history and voicemail are all easy to access, as is the ability to facilitate conference calls. In the longer term will be able to use the data and reports produced by Vision to analyse call patterns and adjust the system accordingly, helping us to be more pro-active at peak call times."

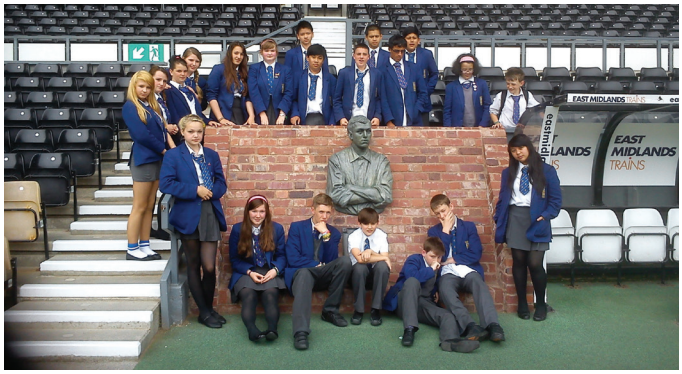
Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy is already enjoying significant cost savings on calls through their SpliceCom system and expect a 10 year Return On Investment (RoI). "We also have lower maintenance costs as several aspects of the SpliceCom system are now managed internally by our ICT helpdesk. This means handset adds, moves and changes no longer require an engineering visit, making them quicker to implement in addition to saving us money," says Michael Hilton. "The new system also utilises existing Cat5e data cabling for phone extensions, so as we add more classrooms and offices in the future they will be much easier to accommodate."

Reviewing The Process

And what lessons have been learnt from the whole exercise? "Ensure that you check the T&Cs of your existing contract, particularly the notice period," says Michael Hilton. "Ours was 90 days. Many telecom's contracts also feature an 'auto renewal' clause, which can be easily missed. Allow plenty of time for planning infrastructure changes such as adding additional Power over Ethernet (PoE) switches and check that any comms cabinets you are planning to use have sufficient spare capacity. Finally involve all stakeholders from day one to ensure there are no surprises on go-live day.

Looking Forward

In the short term future there are plans for several staff to trial SpliceCom's iPCS mobility app on their SmartPhones, enabling them to make and receive calls wherever they might be on the campus. "We're also planning to investigate how we can integrate our MIS database (Facility from Advanced Learning) so the callers name and their contact records will automatically appear on the PC screen, thereby enhancing our customer service levels," concludes Michael Hilton.



By replacing their two existing telephone system with a single SpliceCom solution supporting 110 extensions, Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy has;

- Unified their communications infrastructure
- Slashed on-going call, system management and maintenance costs
- Simplified and standardised everyday telephone use whilst delivering significantly more features and benefits
- Provided a flexible platform able to support future communication needs

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The Hall Farm Business Centre, Berry Lane, Chorleywood, Hertfordshire WD3 5EX Tel: 01923 287700 Fax: 01923 287722
Email: info@splicecom.com Website: www.splicecom.com