

ShoreTel & Coleg Glan Hafren



Cardiff's largest further education college replaces managed voice service with IP Unified Communications system from ShoreTel



CHALLENGE

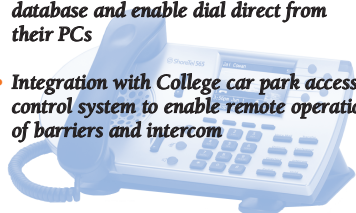
- With four College sites and 600 staff served by an ageing and inflexible managed voice system, communications were becoming strained at Coleg Glan Hafren. As the College continued to expand, conducting moves, adds and changes was costly; routing calls to the right extension was difficult; and voicemails were lost.

SOLUTION

- The College deploys ShoreTel's ShoreGear voice switches and ShorePhone IP telephones to consolidate its four sites under a single, reliable and centrally managed voice network

BENEFITS

- Significant cost savings and efficiency gains realised by eliminating multiple PBXs and consolidating separate sites under one centrally managed IP Unified Communications system
- Integrated voice applications improve call handling 100%; hunt group and automatic forwarding to mobile numbers ensures staff can be contacted when needed
- Integration with Microsoft Outlook allows voicemail notifications to be delivered direct to a user's inbox and accessed by remote workers
- ShoreTel directory has been integrated with the College's desktop Web application to allow users to search the ShoreWare Personal Call Manager database and enable dial direct from their PCs
- Integration with College car park access control system to enable remote operation of barriers and intercom



Spread over four sites, Coleg Glan Hafren has transformed its communications network by replacing an ageing managed voice system with ShoreTel's IP Unified Communications system. This distributed phone system with integrated voice applications and intuitive management interface, has enabled the College to increase efficiency, reduce costs and improve the caller experience.

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 located around the city, including a plush hair and beauty salon called the Design Academy. Previous to ShoreTel®, the College had an ageing voice network of 240 desk phones and Siemens Realitis switches at three campus sites. The Design Academy however, was a separate entity with its own BT lines.

"Routing calls from Trowbridge through to the correct person was tricky," recalls Gareth Burton, IT manager, 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."

Counting the cost of moves, adds and changes

Another headache was the cost of implementing moves, adds and changes (MACs). "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," continues Burton. "Anytime we needed to setup, 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 system.

Assessing IP Unified Communications system options

Burton and his team investigated the solutions available. They drew up a specification for a distributed and scalable system that could serve a large user base of mobile workers and which offered integration with Microsoft Outlook® for voicemail notification. Further key requirements included:

- Fully customisable auto attendant with facility to record bi-lingual prompts
- Hunt group style overflow for incoming calls to main receptions and departmental numbers
- Call centre and soft phone facilities
- Call logging and reporting



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**– Gareth Burton,
IT Manager, Coleg Glan Hafren**

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,” recalls 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 a ShoreGear® E1, three ShoreGear 120, and six ShoreGear 40 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 a combination of 110, 230 and 560 ShorePhone® IP telephones (the 560s providing operator backup functionality). These phones are configured automatically when added to the network.

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

Taking control of communications

This new distributed architecture has enabled the College to replace its multiple PBXs with a single centrally managed system. “Using ShoreTel’s browser-based ShoreWare® Director, the system is extremely easy to manage – probably the easiest of all the products we looked at,” Burton confirms. “We can add new users and locations, configure voicemail and, essentially, do all the things that were done previously by an external engineer.” And, on the odd occasion where 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 to be actioned – often before anyone at the College notices.”

The ShoreTel system’s integrated features such as voicemail, automated attendant and automatic call distribution (ACD) have enabled the College to realise 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,” continues Burton.

Facilities such as hunt groups and automatic forwarding to mobile numbers ensure that staff can be contacted when needed – allowing the college to utilise its reception staff more efficiently. According to Burton, “During our student enrolment period a mini call centre workgroup was setup, 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 Unified Communications system, any staff member can login to a phone using their personal extension to make a call or access voicemail. And with ShoreWare Personal Call Manager 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.

Driving innovation

There have also been 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 dialling them, as well as running the intercom over the network. “This is just one example of the kinds of things you discover with an IP Unified Communications system.”

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.