BIALIK COLLEGE

CASE STUDY   SWITCHVOX

OBJECTIVE

Bialik College consistently ranks among the leading schools in Victorian Certificate of Education performance, providing more than 1,060 students from K-12 with an outstanding Jewish and general education.

Bialik College's existing phone system was ageing and at capacity. The school needed a flexible solution that would grow with the school space, increase productivity, and improve communication between staff, students and parents.

Digium Switchvox lets Bialik College leverage its existing data infrastructure, reducing network costs, deploying telephones in classrooms, and reducing costs by moving it to a single network environment.

CHALLENGE

Bialik College had a traditional phone system that was ageing and at capacity with no room for expansion. The system was inflexible as all wiring needed to be fixed to the server, with no provisions for wireless or to leverage existing Ethernet cables to connect handsets.

The college was experiencing significant growth and the existing system only allowed 100 extensions and couldn't be upgraded.

David Micallef, head of technology, Bialik College, said, "Bialik College's existing system was restrictive due to limited functionality and ability to expand. In addition, replacement parts were no longer being made, which meant that repairs would prove difficult should something break down.

"Bialik College needed a flexible solution that would grow with the school, increase productivity, and improve communication for staff, students and parents. Digium Switchvox's functionality and a lower total cost of ownership than competing offerings made it the ideal system to meet the school's needs."

SOLUTION

Bialik College implemented a self-managed Digium Switchvox voice over IP (VoIP) telephony platform.

The Switchvox IP PBX delivers unified communications, letting Bialik College integrate its phone system partially or totally to its data network. The Switchvox platform delivers advanced functionality as standard features, including conference bridging, call recording, call queues, interactive voice response (IVR) functionality and integrated voicemail.

Both the cost of wiring and maintaining a traditional PABX has historically been cost prohibitive for schools. With heightened security risks, increasing demands from parents to communicate with teachers and the need to improve productivity, the model of limited voice capability in schools is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. As most schools adopt local area network (LAN) networks, the opportunity arises for schools to address these demands with VoIP.

The implementation included one AA355 Switchvox server. There are more than 150 Polycom handsets operational across the college.

Ilan Rubin, director, Wavelink, said, "Digium Switchvox provides schools, like Bialik College, with extensive built-in functionality at no additional cost, making it affordable for schools running to a budget.

"It offers the potential for application integration including linking the phone system into the attendance system for registering absent students, setting up IVR with information on school events, linking the phone system to SMS for quick dissemination of information to parents, and the ability for staff to work remotely via soft phones.

"Conference bridge is also a standard feature of the Digium Switchvox, letting up to 30 users dial in to a single conference call, making it perfect for staff meetings."

RESULT

The Switchvox solution lets Bialik College intelligently use VoIP to reduce telephony costs.

The system is easy-to-use and customizable, delivering an advanced communications system that enhances the college's telephony experience, improves communication between teachers and parents and optimises operational productivity via reducing costs and intelligent call routing.

Digium Switchvox lets Bialik College leverage its existing data infrastructure to reduce network costs, deploy telephones in classrooms, and reduce network management and maintenance costs by moving it to a single network environment.

Micallef said, "The key driver behind the decision to implement Switchvox was the flexibility it offered. By leveraging the existing Ethernet cabling already in use by the school's computers, the IT department no longer has to worry about extra cabling when we get new staff or move staff around the college.

"Staff members now simply have to pick up their phone and plug it into the new location, and the system retains all vital information, such as the extension number, address book and email address, linked to that handset, regardless of its physical location.

"Bialik College now has more than 150 Polycom handsets connected to the Switchvox with plenty of room to expand."

In addition the open-standards system lets Bialik College choose a mix of standards-based SIP handsets, with no ties to particular vendors, with a variety of functions to meet the different needs of staff. This lets the college select a range of different handsets, including video and conference phones and other SIP devices such as Wi-Fi handsets.

The system also lets staff use their iPhones as softphones via Wi-Fi using the school's Meru wireless local area network (WLAN), which means they are able to take and make phone calls while moving around the campus increasing productivity and letting staff return calls in a timely manner.

Bialik College is taking advantage of included functionality of the Switchvox such as delivery of voicemail via email, availability of individual extension numbers for all staff, IVR, and browser-based switchboard used by reception, which makes transferring calls easier and lets reception see if staff members are on the phone or at their desk. These features assist teachers with increasing their productivity and being more responsive to parents and staff members.

Micallef said, "Digium Switchvox provides comprehensive unified communications and integrated voicemail as a standard feature, giving teachers the ability to receive voicemails and faxes from parents and staff directly to Microsoft Outlook, which they can view or listen to via their PC or iPhone, making communication much more effective."

The Digium Switchvox can be fully managed by the IT department, letting the college action its own moves, shifts and changes to the system, which means there is no need to outsource to contractors further reducing maintenance costs.

"In fact, the system is so easy to use that staff are able to manage their own telephony needs including change of name, email addresses, call forward, and time of day rules all through Switchvox's browser-based interface," Micallef said.

ABOUT WAVELINK

Wavelink (www.wavelink.com.au) specialises in the supply, marketing and support of a range of leading edge business IP, wireless, communication and network security and access solutions. Wavelink distributes a range of products from Digium, Meru Networks, Polycom, Cisco, AirTight, Nomadix and Identity Networks.

ABOUT DIGIUM

Digium, Inc., the Asterisk® Company, created, owns and is the innovative force behind Asterisk, the most widely used open source telephony software. Since its founding in 1999, Digium has become the open source alternative to proprietary communication providers, with offerings that cost as much as 80 per cent less. Digium offers Asterisk software free to the open source community and offers Asterisk Business Edition and Switchvox IP PBX software to power a broad family of products for small, medium and large businesses. The company's product line includes a wide range of hardware and software to enable resellers and customers to implement turnkey VoIP systems or to design their own custom telephony solutions. More information is available at www.digium.com.

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