Education

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Newman College Upgrades to 3CX and Fanvil cutting costs by 75%

For Newman College, telephony is at the core of the operating infrastructure. However, their existing communications system was starting to age, being installed when the college first opened in 2011. Expired warranties and rising service costs meant that it was time to review the situation and look for a cost-effective solution.

The Challenge

The existing Cisco®* PBX was not meeting the demanding needs for a growing digital learning environment. The necessity to connect staff across the site, even if they do not have a traditional desk to work from, was growing. Added to that, enabling home working was a must-have especially in light of a global pandemic.

As a school, safeguarding is always of paramount consideration and therefore call recording was needed. To get the existing PBX up to scratch, a large financial outlay would be required.

Day-to-day changes and updates on the existing system were becoming problematic as these requests needed to be made via the 3rd party support company. This incurred additional costs and lead times before the changes were made.

The school had 75+ handsets that needed to be replaced over a 70,000m2 site, including some remote locations, so rolling out a new system could likely be very labour intensive.

3CX + Fanvil Offer the Solution

Previous experience meant that the school was keen to avoid large capital expenditure by purchasing on-premise hardware so they turned their focus to cloud-based solutions. After researching several alternatives and speaking to other similar-sized schools about their experiences, 3CX soon stood out as the obvious choice.

A cloud server and 3CX installation were quickly set up, and a fully working unified communications system was implemented in under 24 hours. They were able to get the call flow they wanted up and running in no time at all, safe in the knowledge that it can be adapted and improved if needed.

As there were 75+ handsets to replace, the school looked at various IP phone manufacturers and settled on Fanvil due to the build quality and affordability. As 3CX fully supports Fanvil handsets, it was a very simple process to connect the two together. The built-in provisioning templates in 3CX enabled quick deployment with minimal input from the IT team.

Of particular importance, the administrators can use 3CX to push out updates and configuration changes to all the phones without having to physically go around the site, visiting every office.

Newman College - Aerial Photo

“The high build quality and wide range of the Fanvil handsets coupled with the extensive features and reasonable cost meant that it was an easy decision to choose Fanvil phones to complement the 3CX system…By moving from our old ISDN lines to SIP trunks, using Fanvil and 3CX we have reduced our monthly telecoms bill to less than a quarter of the cost of our previous solution. Any company regardless of the size or scale should consider moving to Fanvil and 3CX. The extra functionality that you get from this combination will exceed any expectations you have for a telephone system. The reasonable price of handsets and low monthly running costs will undoubtedly save you money. We just wish we had made the change sooner!”

Ian Worsley, IT Strategic Manager, Newman RC College

The Results

The new 3CX system has allowed much more control over every aspect of the communications system. The simple and intuitive admin portal has meant that the in-house IT admin team can do everything that they need to keep the system running day-to-day, without the regular calls to support as experienced with the previous system.

The flexible digital receptionist and call queues have improved the school’s call flow and reduced the time callers spend waiting. A wide range of in-built reports are utilized to regularly monitor calls that go unanswered and identify areas for improvement. Call recording has been implemented as it is included with 3CX at no additional cost, to ensure safeguarding standards.

As 3CX supports unlimited extensions, the WebClient and mobile applications have allowed every member of staff to be provided with an extension for free. This has resulted in staff who aren’t based in an office, to be reachable no matter their location on, or offsite.

Being able to search for people by name removed the need for printed phone lists to be constantly updated or extension numbers to be remembered. Receptionists, and everyone else who has embraced the web app in tandem with the Fanvil phones have found making calls and accessing

voicemail much simpler than with the previous system. College staff also have commented on the excellent call quality of the Fanvil handsets, and their ease of use.

Finally, migrating to 3CX has allowed the school to move from traditional ISDN lines to cheaper SIP trunks, reducing the monthly telecom bill to less than a quarter of the cost of the previous solution.

The Customer

Newman College Logo

Newman College is a large Roman Catholic Secondary school serving Oldham in the UK, and the surrounding areas. With over 1,500 students and 250 members of staff, they strive to cultivate and celebrate their distinct Catholic nature through the promotion of ‘Dignity and Excellence’ for all members of the College family.

3CX Provides Mayfield School with Future-proof Comms Upgrade

Mayfield School found themselves with a phone system that was hosted in a data center about to be decommissioned. With only three months to find a suitable replacement, they turned to Clarion Communication Management to fit them out with a modern, future-proof system.

The Challenge

With a hosted phone system that was soon to be decommissioned along with its data center, Mayfield School needed to quickly find a new solution. They wanted a system that could offer the same level of functionality as their previous Cisco®* system but with additional enhancements that would suit their evolving needs. Despite their high-level criteria, they also needed a complete solution that would be simple to use, flexible, scalable, and most importantly affordable. What's more, as the school operates across two sites, it was crucial that the new system be completely reliable and easy to deploy at multiple locations. Staff need to be able to respond quickly and keep all lines of communication open at all times, whether with other staff members, parents, or carers. In a nutshell, Mayfield School was looking for a phone service solution for its 80+ existing users, that could:

- Increase overall system efficiency.
- Standardize telephony across the MAT (Multi-Academy Trust).
- Reduce costs and improve functionality.
- Facilitate broadcasting for emergencies.
- Offer scalability for future expansion.

3CX Offers a Solution

Up against four other telecommunications providers for tender, Clarion knew that 3CX was the right solution for the school's needs. The situation was time-sensitive and required that the new phone

system be rolled out without disruption. Not only could 3CX be deployed seamlessly in a matter of hours, the ease of use and management meant that employees could easily adapt to the new apps and features without any learning curve. What's more, the system was sure to be future-proof for the school, reducing costs, providing the latest technologies, and offering an incredible level of scalability.

Having previously worked with 3CX Partner Clarion, IT Operations Manager Aron V Davies knew the school could rely on them to provide the best solution. After testing 3CX offsite and learning about its various benefits and cost-savings, the choice was clear.

The project, involving a PRO license and on-premise deployment, was completed in one month. In addition, the school was able to utilize its existing infrastructure and devices for further cost savings.

Mayfield School - Case Study
"In the end, we went for the best value and best technology. The choice was obvious because the simplicity, features and cost-effective capabilities of 3CX really stood out."

Aron V Davies, IT Operations Manager, Mayfield School

The Results

Mayfield was delighted to have their Cisco® system replaced before the decommission deadline, allowing for continued service across sites without downtime. In addition to continuing with the same functionality they were used to, they welcomed numerous additional features and benefits. In particular, the school was relieved to have easily deployed the smartphone apps, and have extensions provisioned remotely during the Covid-19 lockdown. Mobility and productivity saw significant improvements as they could now easily access all channels of communication from wherever they were located. Feedback from staff has been favorable, so much so that the school now plans to roll out 3CX across the Academy Trust.

Other benefits and challenges that Mayfield School observed were:

- Overhead paging integration with third-party tannoy system
- Free calls to UK landlines and mobiles.
- No per extension pricing.

- Easy and cost-effective setup.
- Inclusion of call recording.
- Inbuilt disaster recovery.

The Customer

Mayfield school logo

Mayfield School is an educational institution based in Birmingham, UK. The school is for children and young people aged 3-19 who have a range of learning difficulties and is part of the Educational Impact Academy Trust. Mayfield works with numerous other schools, businesses, and charities in the community to create an inclusive and positive learning environment that is beneficial and supportive to everyone.

The school uses its connection to the community to broaden the curriculum on offer as well as providing pupils with regular educational and social outings. With around 300 pupils across two different sites, Mayfield School is ardent about offering individual focus to each child, making them one of the leading educational providers for special needs children in the region.