

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

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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.

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