

Kentucky university seeing benefits of unified communications platform

Brescia University upgrades to Jive Communications hosted phone system for a better user experience

Frequent downtime. Lengthy change processes. Complicated pricing structure. These were just a few of the issues with Brescia University's phone system that was in use prior to 2014. The western Kentucky institution—which serves just over 1,000 students—had aging, IP-based hosted solution.

"Calls would drop all the time," says Chris Ford, Director of Information Technology for Brescia. "We needed a more stable cloud solution that was hosted outside the university."

Ford reached out to many communications providers, many of whom took too long to give him concrete prices and information. Many had per-building installation costs or complicated rules involving bandwidth.

"There was a lot of back-and-forth with those companies," he says. "I just wanted ease in getting started."

Jive Communications, Inc., met that need for ease. Jive's hosted Voice over IP phone systems are reliable and scalable for any size campus. And when it comes to implementation, Jive ensures a smooth, personalized process.

"We received answers to our questions very quickly," says Ford.

That promise of high-quality service was backed up when Ford spoke with other higher ed Jive customers, who described how Jive's support teams were highly responsive even long after implementation was completed. Another differentiator was the ability to demo the specific phones under consideration.

"Before committing, we were able to hook Jive's phones up to our hardware to test their effectiveness," says Ford. "We were even able to set up phone extensions to simulate everyday use."

University staff from departments across campus were able to try the phones during the demo period, which lasted from August until through September 2014. End users were then given training until they felt comfortable with the new phones. By late November, the entire campus had moved over to Jive's VoIP system.



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"Because we had a phased approach, allowing staff to use their old phones while trying out Jive's phones, there was no panic on the first day of the new system," says Ford. "Users were even able to set up their voicemails in advance."

Ford and his team can use a self-service portal or make a quick call to Jive for instantaneous changes. Users are also empowered to manage their own call routing or voicemails.

"If an employee forgets their voicemail password, they simply log in to the web portal and create a new one themselves," says Ford. "This relieves some of the burden that used to be on our IT team."

Overall, Brescia staff report Jive's system is far easier to use than their previous phones. Recording a voicemail is less confusing, and there has been no downtime. Both faxes and voicemails can be delivered to a user's email address. On the administrative side, Ford appreciates the single cost structure of Jive's plan.

"We used to pay for long distance separately, and certain types of voicemails cost more too," he says. "Now I have a bill that is one page long and simple to understand."

And that top-notch service about which other university customers raved? Ford has seen it in action.

"Support is very important to us, and Jive consistently delivers," he says. "They call us monthly to check in and see how the system is. You don't often experience that level of service from a partner."



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