



Mastering VoIP

Case Study: Nationwide VoIP Deployment
with Salesforce Integration



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The nationwide vocational education player made up of the Aviation Institute of Maintenance, Centura College and Tidewater Tech has modernized its communications and revolutionized its ability to be agile in serving students, thanks to a powerful digital transformation with Simplicity VoIP at its heart.

The consortium of vocational schools is focused on adult education in a range of skilled trade areas, including advanced aircraft maintenance, automotive, building maintenance and repair, HVAC, health-tech services and more. It has 20 locations across the country, and more than 300 employees working in campus-staff roles.

Yet, despite its reputation for delivering leading-edge, state-of-the-art skills to its students, its own internal operations were stuck in an earlier era, with no advanced voice communications and a heavy reliance on legacy systems. In addition, there was no customer relationship management (CRM) system, and no way to log, analyze and optimize the admissions staff's interactions with current, former and prospective students.

From California to Florida, the schools are now better serving their students and helping admissions staff increase its enrollment, with the implementation of flexible, intuitive and fully featured voice-over-IP (VoIP) phone service from Simplicity with mobile functionality, and a rich integration with Salesforce.com's CRM platform.



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The Main Pain Point

Prior to the group's communications transformation, the Aviation Institute of Maintenance, Centura College and Tidewater Tech were all largely using a paper-based system, and an aging copper-based phone system and a lack of centralized information management was making it difficult to drive collaboration and efficiencies (as well as higher enrollment).

For instance, as a for-profit education center, the consortium relies on prospecting for new students as a core activity. It needed a way to allow its 170 admission reps to develop better relationships and to be more efficient, ideally with a 360-degree view of each prospective student, based on their interactions across all channels of communication over time.

Instead, "everything we did prior to this transition was independent and manual," explained Chris Vtipil, Project Manager at the colleges. "We had no way to look at the number of phone calls that admissions reps were making, how many of those calls connected, inbound vs. outbound and so on...and to make notes, reps had to open up a separate database and update it."

Visibility into call activity was a key sticking point, according to Suzie Quinlan, Business Analyst with CrossPeak Solutions. CrossPeak worked with Simplicity as the integrator for the Salesforce.com portion of the project.

"An admissions rep could say that they made 100 phone calls, but only one prospective person comes in for an interview?" Quinlan explained. "These reps were manually going in and filling out an Excel sheet to track their calls, with no reporting or oversight."

Also, the group was using around 30 different tools to keep track of its admissions success and student information, Quinlan added.

"There are a lot of different kinds of employees at the campuses," she explained. "You have service reps, receptionists, the director of admissions at each location – and everyone has a bit of a different role for what they do for the campus. They had so many different tools that they used, and they really wanted to make it more efficient and consolidated."

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The Solution – Simplicity VoIP



Across its distributed footprint, the consortium decided to make a very big change, starting with the implementation of a new, VoIP-based phone system. Aviation Institute of Maintenance was an existing Simplicity customer with four locations and was familiar with its features; and while the colleges did consider a rival bid, Simplicity won the extended contract thanks to its ability to provide hosted VoIP, its customizable approach, its customer service organization, and its transparent and competitive price point.

“We needed a VoIP partner who could deliver at a reasonable cost and help coordinate the integration between the VoIP and the CRM so that they would work in harmony,” Vtipil said. “Simplicity did that – they proactively contacted Salesforce.com and CrossPeak, the integrator, and then made several contacts over there prior to giving us their proposal to confirm that they could do what we needed.”

The colleges selected Simplicity VoIP to be implemented along with a greenfield deployment of Salesforce.com for those working in admissions. The joint platform was introduced at the group’s annual conference in January 2020, after which rollouts commenced, with five locations going live at a time. The transition, according to Vtipil, was “almost flawless.”

On the admissions side, Simplicity’s ability to integrate PBX features with Salesforce.com was a gamechanger for the schools.

“One of the advantages of Simplicity is that we have the ability to integrate with a variety of software and programs via APIs,” explained Peter Kraehmer, Vice President of Enterprise Sales for Simplicity VoIP.

For instance, Simplicity worked with a VAR called Tenfold, which provided a CTI (computer-telephony integration) solution that brings together Simplicity and Salesforce.com with other communications channels, so that admissions reps can see information from different systems at the point of interaction.

For instance, when someone calls in, a screen-pop will appear on the rep’s screen with relevant information about previous conversations that the staff may have had with the caller – including via channels such as Facebook or Twitter, texting or messaging app.

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The Solution – Simplicity VoIP

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“Efficiencies and visibility into the business from a leadership standpoint”

“This offers an overall improved candidate experience, because admissions staff now know who’s calling in and what they’re calling in about, before they even answer the phone,” Thomas Webster, Enterprise Account Executive at Tenfold, explained.

Simplicity also performs automatic data capture and reporting on calling activity via the CTI; the system captures relevant data points from a given conversation and packages it into data logs for the leadership team across the Aviation Institute of Maintenance, Centura College and Tidewater Tech. The logs show how many inbound and outbound calls a rep has handled, how long a call was, and whether it connected with someone on the other end, among other information.

“The IT staff was looking for a way to improve the admissions agents’ student recruitment efforts,” explained Webster. “They wanted efficiencies and visibility into the business from a leadership standpoint, with a primary objective being the ability to gather real-time phone call interaction data.”

Vtipil noted that there are multiple ways to analyze the data as well.

“Simplicity offers an easy, user-friendly, Windows-based system, and you can get as much out of it as you want to dig out of it,” he said. “Automated reports are emailed through Simplicity every night, and the analytics you can get out of it are endless.”

Vtipil also explained that Simplicity’s call-quality features have been important for the group’s efforts to drive admissions. “Managers can listen into calls for call quality, or they can easily be brought in to give information and answer questions,” Vtipil said. “There are even functions where a manager can essentially whisper in a rep’s ear and offer cues and suggestions that the person on other end of the call can’t hear. Or, a manager can take over the phone call, mute the employee and make corrections. There are so many possibilities, and we’re still exploring some of the stuff we can do.”

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Key to Success

With any multi-site implementation, particularly one that represents as big of a step change as the project with the Aviation Institute of Maintenance, Centura College and Tidewater Tech, comprehensive and customized training is an essential key to success. To that end, Simplicity and its partners moved to minimize any user challenges before the rollout started.

Simplicity implemented special project designation and cross-department support on the front end for the colleges. It first leveraged a team of support personnel that provided emailed materials, conducted webinars, and provided onsite support and training.

“We had a weekly conference call, and any of the users could call in and ask questions, on things like how to update voicemail, how to see their call statistics and so on,” Vtipil explained. “They provided those calls every week through the transition period. They were quite popular, and we’ve had almost no service calls.”

Post-implementation, on an ongoing basis, the schools’ users also have 24/7 Simplicity Client Services department access, the ability to tap sales engineering help and access to marketing resources.

Meanwhile, the mobile app - SimplicityGO, which was shown in a demo at the group’s January conference but not initially earmarked for use by the colleges’ leadership, was tapped by staff anyway. Simplicity accordingly layered on additional training and collateral for the mobile app features.

“This was a complex project with a lot of customizations, locations and integrations,” explained Kraehmer. “Simplicity’s agility and flexibility, and the capability to tailor our platform to the colleges’ business needs has enabled them to go a long way towards achieving their long-term goals – and we couldn’t be prouder to be their technology partner.”

Going forward, the project is also future-proofed: Simplicity VoIP, through its SimplicityLink offering, partners with several integration companies to offer tailored and customized integrations to our platform. This offers immense flexibility for extending the communications system down the line, should the Aviation Institute of Maintenance, Centura College and Tidewater Tech require that.

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Work From Home Bonus

As the rollout progressed, many workers also adopted the Simplicity mobile app - SimplicityGO, which became a core success story for the schools as the coronavirus pandemic forced its employees to do their jobs remotely from home.

“For no additional cost, work from home via a cell phone using the SimplicityGo app”

“The timing for this was perfect because we had it in place before COVID-19 hit,” Vtipil said. “We stepped up on app training, and Simplicity took the initiative and let our users know that it was a possibility and available. It’s saving us a lot of grief and risk for our older and vulnerable employees – it’s a fantastic product right now for a reason that we didn’t expect.”

He added, “For no additional cost, any Simplicity user can work from home via cell phone and can use the SimplicityGO app. They can use their own work phone number for inbound calling, and calls can ring to cell phones or a home line.”



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