

Revere (MA) Public Schools

School district reduces phone operating costs and increases productivity.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Industry: Education
- Locations: 20
- Number of Employees: 1,000+

CHALLENGE

- Reduce Phone Network Operational Costs
- Increase Staff Efficiency

RESULT

- Quick & Significant ROI
- Improved Productivity

VERTICAL SOLUTION

- Wave IP
- Wave ViewPoint Client
- Wave Global Reporter

Background

The Revere (MA) Public School system is in Eastern Massachusetts and just five miles from downtown Boston. It serves a general population of approximately 47,000 residents with 11 elementary, middle, junior high and high schools. There are also 9 other administrative buildings. In addition there are over 1,000 teachers, staff and other employees throughout the district.

The School Department has a strong commitment to innovating in order to bring the best possible education to all of its students. One area that has received significant resources recently is investment in technology to achieve their goals. In addition to adding technology in the classroom, the school department is also upgrading its technology infrastructure for the administration and staff.

In 2009, the school department faced the same situation as countless other school districts around the country, an aging phone system that was expensive to upkeep and had limited functionality. "Our system had copper lines for each phone and hundreds of lines throughout the system," said Jonathan Ferrara, IT Manager. "The system was several years old and maintaining all those lines and phones was starting to add up. We also had very limited capabilities. Basically, the phone rang, it recorded voicemail and with some skill, one could transfer a call."

The school department was able to secure funds for a new IT network that represented the latest in technology. "We were interested in tapping into the power of technology and our new network to get the most out of it," said Paul Dakin, Superintendent. "I want to do the best for my students and the people who work hard to give them that. We needed to leverage our technology to get the most out of our phone system and IT network."

The criteria were simple for evaluating a new system. It had to be IP-based and work on the new IT network. It had to reduce the overall cost of running and maintaining a phone system. It needed to help make teachers, staff and administrators more efficient.

"There were several options for us to look at," said Mr. Ferrara. "We took a look at the usual players in the market. Cisco met most of the technical needs but the ongoing costs were not in our budget. Avaya cost exceeded what we had budgeted for the project. ShoreTel seemed to meet most of the criteria but they didn't seem to scale well after 80 phones."

“Voice Systems did a fantastic job with the installation and switchover. It was virtually seamless. Downtime was minimal and people were trained in less than a day before they were off and running with the system.”

– Jonathan Ferrara, IT Manager

Solution

Vertical Wave IP® was also considered in the initial stages. “We had a great working relationship with Rich Mederios and the team at Voice Systems, Inc. They came to us with a proposal that included Vertical’s Wave IP platform. Almost immediately we could see that it fit the bill,” said Mr. Ferrara. “The system is IP-based and can support an almost infinite number of mailboxes. It allowed us to eliminate several phone lines through SIP Trunking. And the costs were well within our budget.”

Not only did the system meet those criteria, it also delivered a large set of applications. Anchored by the award-winning Wave ViewPoint Unified Communications desktop client, Revere Schools had access to such features as remote access, external extension support, and call logging to name a few. “These features would prove to make life easier for our users,” said Mr. Dakin.

Voice Systems worked closely with the IT team to layout the requirements and manage the installation. “Voice Systems did a fantastic job with the installation and switchover. It was virtually seamless,” said Mr. Ferrara. “Downtime was minimal and people were trained in less than a day before they were off and running with the system.”

Results

Once the system was implemented, all locations were on one platform connected through the IT network. Immediately they were able to implement SIP Trunking for long distance. “We are able to save 67% off of our usual phone bill,” said Mr. Ferrara. They also reduced the number of copper lines while the number of mailboxes remained the same. Everyone kept their own phone numbers. And as the school department grows, the system can keep adding phones at minimal cost.

With Wave ViewPoint installed on the desktop, employees began to see quick productivity boosts. “Now, employees don’t need to know individual phone numbers,” said Mr. Dakin “You can look the person up by name, click and you are dialing the number. No time is wasted trying to find numbers.” Administrative assistants can now see who is calling and can forward that call to the appropriate person. “That saves us time as well as reducing the frustration for callers,” Mr. Dakin added. “And with call logging, we

can keep a record of calls and the notes relating to those calls. That is an important audit trail that any school district needs.”

Other features the school department relies on now are remote access and external extensions. “With remote access, phone calls can be routed to cell phones. This allows for more flexibility and productivity. People can move from behind the desk and out into the field,” said Mr. Dakin. “And the external extension function is a huge productivity enhancer. Now an employee can be at home but still get phone calls that come into their extension as if they were in the office. This has lessened our down time throughout the department,” he said.

As testament to the success of the program, other city departments signed on to the network. “We have added City Hall, the Fire Department and the Police Department,” said Mr. Ferrara. “It has been virtually seamless on the Wave IP platform.”

Given the savings in eliminating copper phone lines, reducing phone maintenance and administrative costs and the productivity gains for employees, Mr. Ferrara sees a quick return on investment. “With the ROI gains we have seen we should be able to pay for the system in less than two years.” And with that savings, the Revere School Department will start to implement more features. “We look forward to utilizing the call center and presence features to build our city wide 311 system. This will enable citizens to call with almost any problem or question and reach the appropriate person quickly,” said Mr. Ferrara. “The power of the Wave IP platform is remarkable. Our options for enhancing system functionality are almost limitless.”

More and more schools are recognizing phone systems are strategic tools that, when deployed and utilized properly, can give them significant productivity gains and ROI. Contact us today and find out how Vertical can connect your business to its most important competitive asset: confidence.

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