Case Study:

Taft School, Connecticut

Connecticut's Taft School aces unified communications with more advanced technology and cost savings. Mitel's MiCloud Enterprise, mobile app, webfax and E-911 capabilities streamline communications and improve the experience for students, parents and faculty.

AT A GLANCE:

SITUATION:

- Legacy systems had limited capabilities and required major, costly upgrades
- Limited points of service and information in the event of an emergency
- IT teams were strained each year to rewire office moves

SOLUTION:

- MiCloud Enterprise
- MiCollab mobile app and webfax
- Enhanced 911

RESULTS:

- Reliable, scalable unified communications system
- Cost savings on servers, upgrades and DID (direct inward dialing) numbers
- Improved business continuity and flexibility for IT
- Enhanced responsiveness and focus in the event of an emergency

Mitel

Powering connections

Organization

Founded in 1890 as a private boarding and day school, Taft School's mission is to educate the whole student. At their beautiful 226-acre campus in Watertown, Connecticut, 595 students from 33 states and 44 countries are educated by 129 faculty members, averaging 11 students per class for a 1:5 teacher-student ratio.

Situation

Horace D. Taft dreamt of starting his own school and fulfilled that dream in 1890 with his namesake school, first based in Pelham Manor, New York and moved to Watertown, Connecticut in 1893. Crafted by Taft himself, their motto is "Non ut sibi ministretur sed ut ministret", which is Latin for "Not to be served but to serve." Taft students embrace this founding principle throughout their community and around the world. They engage in service-based programs focused on the environment and sustainability, children and families, and health initiatives. Rounding out their mission to educate the whole student, Taft School also develops the student's academic, artistic and athletic abilities. Known for their belief that character, above all else, determines success in life, many accomplished leaders are proud alumni of the Taft School.

Just as Taft has remained committed to preparing its students for the ever-changing world, it is also committed to serving students, parents and faculty with a technologically-advanced communications system that evolves with the times.

Solution

Frank Trosky, Systems Administrator, is well-versed in many areas of IT and network support and has seen many changes in the telecommunications industry throughout his twenty years at Taft School. As a long-time Mitel customer with an SX2000 analog system, Trosky was pleased with the service and capabilities. As IP-based solutions became more stable and popular, Trosky began to consider upgrading the school's system. To make sure he fully understood the current offerings in the industry, he looked at many vendors and narrowed his options to Cisco and Mitel.

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> **Frank Trosky, Systems Administrator**
> **Taft School**

"Mitel's services had always been stable and reliable. We were somewhat reluctant to move to the cloud though. We weren't sure how reliable the phone system would be. However, once we used some cloud-based phones in a demo environment setup by Mitel, we were confident the cloud was the right choice," states Trosky.

Additionally, through further discussions with Mitel and their partner, Trosky learned how Mitel's solutions have evolved to meet the increased communications demands placed on educational institutions. It's no longer just about a phone answered by an administrative assistant who transfers the calls. School communications systems today need to be flexible and are an important component to increasing safety and helping accommodate budgets that often have tight constraints.

"MiCloud Enterprise provides the flexibility, reliability and ease-of-use that we were looking for. The broad range of customizable options, including conferencing, messaging and mobility, give us the right tools to increase productivity, enhance safety, and maximize our IT investment. We're very happy to have selected Mitel's MiCloud Enterprise platform, with its integrated mobile and webfax apps," Trosky states.

> "We reduced to around 500 lines, which saves us about $1,000 per month on server fees and DID (direct inward dialing) numbers. The cloud also eliminates the need for periodic forklift upgrades, saving us quite a bit in future equipment, overhead and resource costs."

Frank Trosky, Systems Administrator
Taft School

"The process and costs associated with moving from analog to digital and on-site to the cloud were also a factor. If we moved to Cisco, there would be significant costs and a very involved and time-consuming process. Upgrading with Mitel and their partner was an easy and collaborative process," adds Trosky.

Results

With the expertise and dedication of Mitel and their partner, Taft School was able to reuse many of the existing assets, like some analog phones and lines, and keep those lines functioning as they migrated to the cloud. They weren't burdened with time-consuming and costly process of re-flashing through a firmware update and could migrate on pace with their schedule and available resources, mitigating risk and disruption.

Trosky remarks, "The migration process was well-organized, and fully managed and coordinated by Mitel and their partner. It was clear from the start that they were seasoned project managers with impressive knowledge about the communications industry. Their attention-to-detail, especially with such a complex project, resulted in a very smooth and successful migration."

The team skillfully navigated the potential pitfalls of an enterprise-wide deployment and migrated nearly 400 lines to the cloud without disruption to their operation. From the offices to the dorm rooms to the facilities, the team consolidated phone lines, de-activated lines that were no longer needed and ported the ones they did.

"Through the process of moving to the cloud, we discovered that we didn't need to keep all 950 phone lines. We reduced to around 500 lines, which saves us about $1,000 per month on server fees and DID (direct inward dialing) numbers. The cloud also eliminates the need for periodic forklift upgrades, saving us quite a bit in future equipment, overhead and resource costs," Trosky explains.

There are also more immediate resource savings. For example, as is common with educational institutions, each semester or year there are teachers who move offices for various reasons. At a large campus like Taft School, the task of moving and re-assigning the phones turns into a major IT project.

"The ability for faculty to simply move and plug in their phone at their new office location has been one of the most impactful features of MiCloud Enterprise. IT no longer has the overhead of managing the changes, like re-wiring and re-assigning phones. We can now re-purpose the IT resources for other projects and there's continuity if I'm not available for some reason," added Trosky.

Easy deployment was just the beginning though; a solution that was easy to adopt also mattered. Trosky explains, "Everybody now has a new phone with modern features. The nice, lean phone looks good and the faculty is happy with the updated, customizable options like voicemail to email, messaging, caller ID and the freedom to communicate from anywhere on any device."

One of the most important features has been enhanced 911. Taft now has six different point of service sites, each easily, clearly and immediately identified. "With enhanced 911, emergency personnel go to the right place, right away. This creates a safer environment, with improved attention to the needs of our students and faculty," explains Trosky.

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