

## HIGHER EDUCATION SUCCESS STORY

### Solar brings the power of Unified Communications to the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff

*Staff at the University can now be contacted more easily and directly via the UC system with a single 'follow me' telephone number.*

The University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC) has an international reputation for providing high quality education and training opportunities to a wide range of students. For more than a decade, the University has been independently acclaimed for its superior academic standards and for its high level of student satisfaction. For all of these reasons, UWIC has recently been named as the top new university in Wales, according to the latest league tables.

However, like many universities, UWIC has been affected by the growing demand for university places in recent years and has faced a number of challenges when dealing with the increasing number of prospective students and the clearing process that allocates available places. The University knew that it would need to manage this vital phase of the student recruitment process very carefully.

UWIC wanted to implement a sophisticated communications system that would look and behave like a single, unified platform. At the same time, the University also wanted a flexible and scalable infrastructure that could distribute information across the entire communications environment to prospective students, existing students, lecturers and other University staff.

Solar Communications was identified as a partner with a proven track record of delivering Unified Communications (UC) solutions to a wide range of businesses and organisations with an unrivalled understanding of how these systems work and the benefits they deliver.

Solar provided UWIC with a ShoreTel based UC system that included a number of versatile, real-time tools for managing the University's communications effectively – including telephony, IM (Instant Messaging), voicemail (to phone and pc), presence and collaboration services – for its students, lecturers and staff.

#### The phone calls flood in

Initially UWIC needed a system that would help it to manage the demand for student places. On the day the clearing process opened more than 4000 phone calls were received. Scalability and flexibility, when dealing with peak demands were obviously key requirements and the ShoreTel solution provided by Solar met these demands.

#### CHALLENGE:

- UWIC required a telephone system that could be integrated into existing systems and support access from a variety of devices across the campus. Ease of use and management was important to support seasonal traffic demands and frequently changing client environment.

#### SOLUTION:

- A ShoreTel Unified Communications telephone system with 300 users initially and capable of handling over 4,000 calls during peak times. System can be easily expanded to support all 1,500 users on site

#### BENEFITS:

- The system is cost effective and easy to use and can be easily scaled to support more users.
- Single "follow me" number enabled staff to be easily contacted by students and their peers.
- Users have more control over the system enabling the IT Team to focus on more complex requirements.

*UWIC now has a system that gives the University far greater flexibility, and enables it to communicate much more effectively – with its own staff, with students, and with prospective students.*

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### UC makes lectures (and lecturers) more accessible

UWIC also wanted a UC system that would make its lecturers more accessible to students by offering a number of different communication options, such as fully integrated conferencing, instant messaging and advanced mobility and collaboration capabilities. Resilience was seen as another vitally important feature, especially for a university of this size.

Staff at the University can now be contacted more easily and directly via the UC system with a single 'follow me' telephone number. Lecturers can now access the new system to retrieve their messages via any UC connected telephone, a pc or an iPhone or an app on their smartphones. This form of 'unified mailbox' has proven to be invaluable and as a result, UWIC's 14000+ students can contact lecturers directly via their "one phone and email" for the first time.

Lecturers and staff to do their own 'moves, adds and changes' through simple to use, intuitive, graphical interfaces freeing up time for the IT department to focus on more strategic communication projects. Together, all of these benefits are improving UWIC's productivity and customer service whilst reducing operation and administration costs.

### The benefits

UWIC wanted a system that would allow it to compete in the global education marketplace and now has a system that gives the University far greater flexibility, and enables it to communicate much more effectively – with its own staff, with students, and with prospective students.

Applicants, enquirers and staff are now getting directed straight to the person that can best help them and can leave voice messages if necessary, as opposed to their previous systems that often led to unanswered phones and/or people being bounced back and forth between different staff members when trying to obtain information.

The new UC system is so intuitive to use that staff moving between locations in the University can easily plug into the system themselves with just a one-page instruction document. As such, UWIC feels that the new system represents a major improvement over earlier systems, and that the UC system implemented by Solar has become an integral part of the University's overall communications strategy.

## ABOUT SOLAR COMMUNICATIONS LTD

Established in 1988, Solar Communications is an award winning trusted communications partner for SME and enterprise businesses throughout the UK and Europe. With offices in Chippenham and London, Solar Communications has been "ShoreTel European Partner of the Year" for the past four years and is first and only European Partner to join the "ShoreTel Circle of Excellence."

Solar's knowledge and experience allows bespoke solutions tailored to business requirements that enable customers to improve productivity, reduce costs and increase profitability. Solar has a reputation for excellent customer support consistently scoring over 97% Customer satisfaction through independent analysis. For more information, visit [solar.co.uk](http://solar.co.uk)

**ShoreTel European Partner of the Year 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011**

**Outstanding Customer Service Award 2009, 2010 and 2011**

**ShoreTel Circle of Excellence 2010 and 2011**



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