

Australian Training Institute Improves Student Service and Customer Satisfaction

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TAFE NSW INSTITUTE

- Training
- Tamworth, Australia
- 100 full-time employees at Tamworth location

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

- Current model of customer service does not meet the increasing needs of customers.
- Maintain customer relationships throughout entire student lifecycle.
- Make internal communications more accessible and cost effective.

NETWORK SOLUTIONS

- Cisco Unified Communications provides integrated voice, data, and video communication on a single IP network.
- Cisco Unified CRM Connector integrates Cisco Unified Communications solutions with Microsoft Dynamics CRM at the desktop without additional hardware.
- Microsoft Dynamics CRM provides 360-degree view of customers in a single, intuitive interface.

BUSINESS RESULTS

- Better student experience improves customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- Customer relationships are managed more effectively before, during, and after enrollment.
- Flexible IP network can support new communication applications as needed.

TAFE NSW Institute builds on a century of leadership in delivering superior training and student services.

Business Challenges

For any training organization, responsiveness to student needs is key to delivering a superior educational experience. Technical And Further Education (TAFE) NSW is Australia's largest training provider, and prides itself on offering high-quality, accessible training. The Institute tailors its course offerings to suit its students, whether they are looking for their first job, a career change, or simply extra knowledge and skills.

However, when the Australian government deregulated the country's information and training market, TAFE realized that it needed to improve its customer service to keep pace with new, innovative competitors. For 100 years, the Institute's student relationships had been based on people walking onto campus, choosing the course that they want, and filling out a paper enrollment form.

"More agile organizations have appeared since deregulation began, and they have invested a lot of money in how they handle customer service," says Christopher Celovic, application development manager at the Tamworth location of TAFE NSW. "We are truly competing for customers based on service."

TAFE's customer service organization had been spread out across 11 locations. To improve the quality and consistency of services, the Institute began by restructuring its organization to bring most of its customer relations positions together in one location with other customer services officers located on other campuses. TAFE then developed detailed businesses processes to support students over the complete lifecycle, from enrollment to graduation and beyond.

To support this new lifecycle model, the Institute needed technology that transparently combined a rich variety of customer relations management (CRM) information and services with the speed and convenience of phones.

“Our Cisco and Microsoft solution has revolutionized the way that we do customer service. From the customer’s point of view, it has made us more attractive and in turn more competitive.”

– Christopher Celovic, Application Development Manager, TAFE NSW New England Institute

Network Solutions

After carefully defining its business processes and strategy, TAFE implemented a solution featuring Microsoft Dynamics CRM, supported by a comprehensive Cisco® Unified Communications architecture. Microsoft Dynamics CRM gives TAFE the tools that it needs to create a clear picture of its students and other clients, from initial contact through attendance, graduation, and alumni status.

“We determined that Microsoft Dynamics CRM would be the best solution to deliver a well-functioning, 360-degree view of customers – at minimal expense,” says Celovic.

The Cisco Unified Communications infrastructure delivers advanced telephony and data networking that connects TAFE’s campuses together over a single IP network. Cisco Unified CRM Connector integrates Cisco Unified Communications solutions with Microsoft Dynamics CRM at the desktop, without requiring additional hardware.

“Adding Cisco Unified CRM Connector made our new CRM process even better, and we soon had a fully functional CRM solution that tied transparently with our phone system,” says Celovic.

The Cisco and Microsoft solution lets TAFE leap beyond its paper-based manual processes, enabling the organization to deliver more efficient, informed service to students.

“We use our Customer Service Centre to take calls and questions on courses, and provide informal counseling,” says Celovic. “And we use the voice and data network to enroll people online or over the phone. If a caller has a specific question regarding a course, we can escalate the inquiry to a dean quickly and easily, using the phone, e-mail, or fax.”

Screen pops provide detailed caller information on employee’s PCs, enabling them to be more informed about student needs from the moment they pick up the call. “I had promised screen pops when we first planned the system, and the function immediately worked very well,” says Celovic.

Having a single, complete view of customers has empowered TAFE’s customer service organization with the tools that they need to do their jobs more effectively. “The Cisco and Microsoft solution makes it much easier for our call agents to track and review the work that we have been doing,” says Celovic. “The system keeps call records for as long as we like, and agents can perform searches or go back to update information. Our users find it very helpful.”

The TAFE telecommunications staff worked closely with Dimension Data, a specialist IT services and solution provider, to configure its Cisco Unified Communications architecture. Snapdragon Consulting played a key role in implementing the Microsoft Dynamics CRM platform.

“Dimension Data did all the right things for us, and have been very helpful in getting our Cisco solution running,” says Celovic. “And we would not be where we are without our relationship with Snapdragon. They provided structure for what we are doing with our CRM system.”

The TAFE CRM solution is primarily used to support students, but the Institute's staff are an important customer group as well. Employees will soon rely on the CRM system to support human resources transactions, facilities and maintenance requests, and IT support.

Business Results

The new CRM solution has quickly unleashed a variety of benefits, providing a higher level of student support that will help the Institute stay competitive and thrive.

"If we can manage students more effectively, then we are enriching the experience of the customer, which is our main focus, and we are also in turn helping to grow our business," says Celovic. "Our Cisco and Microsoft solution has revolutionized the way that we deliver customer service. From the customer's point of view, it has made us more attractive and in turn more competitive."

To help TAFE continue to build on student relationships over the long term, the solution also supports outreach efforts to alumni who have completed courses or graduated. "The solution gives us the ability to follow up with students," says Celovic. "This could not have been achieved without our Microsoft CRM and Cisco integration."

Employees appreciate the solution's trouble-free reliability and elegant operation as well. "We have satisfied operators because we have implemented a student management system that works seamlessly – it just *works*, and that is what is important to us."

By migrating its phone operations to a converged IP network, TAFE has also made communications more accessible, while eliminating long-distance charges between its multiple sites. "In the past, long-distance callers had to dial out through a PSTN and request a time-charged long-distance call," says Hayden Lewin, network administrator. "We have key staff in multiple locations, and to work properly they need a communications channel that is open all the time. The Cisco solution gives us this flexibility and saves us money of call charges."

PRODUCT LIST

Routing and Switching

- Cisco 2800 Series Integrated Services Router

Voice and IP Communications

- Cisco Unified CallManager
- Cisco Unified CRM Connector
- Cisco Unified Video Advantage
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 7900 Series Router

Customer Relationship Management Software

- Microsoft Dynamics CRM 3.0 Professional Edition

Next Steps

Now that the student management system has been modernized, Celovic and the IT team at New England TAFE have begun to focus on extending the solution to handle other business processes at TAFE. For example, the Institute has depended on video conferencing for the past decade to bring together its geographically dispersed faculty. The Institute has begun integrating its Cisco Unified Communications system with its existing in-room conferencing systems.

"We are doing some work with Cisco Unified Video Advantage to initiate video conferences to the desktop," says Celovic. "In the near future, we hope to converge some of these features to our CRM system as well."

With the flexible Cisco IP solution in place, TAFE can continue to add advanced new features and support capabilities as it builds on more than a century of providing vocational education and training.

For More Information

To find out more about the Cisco Unified Communications Solution, visit:

<http://www.cisco.com/go/cuc>.



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