MICROSOFT TEAMS, SIP TRUNKING AND DIRECT ROUTING FOR UNIFIED, FUTURE-PROOFED TELEPHONY

Founded in 1996, the Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts (LIPA) is a recognised centre of excellence for performing arts education. As well as offering degree courses in a wide range of disciplines from acting to dance, sound technology, theatre design and more, the institute also comprises a primary school, secondary school and sixth form, each located close to the main campus.

With around 150 full-time staff members, LIPA also collaborates with a wider network of visiting and "sessional" professionals to deliver its highly regarded programmes. The institute is international in both reach and outlook, with many of its 1,200 students hailing from overseas.

The Challenge

LIPA had previously used Skype for Business as its preferred communication and collaboration tool – an on-premises solution that Daisy had also implemented. At the time of this project, the use of Microsoft Teams had been steadily increasing amongst staff, a development that quickly intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keen to avoid running both apps simultaneously, especially since Skype for Business would soon be retired by Microsoft, LIPA decided on a wholesale switch to Microsoft Teams. The project provided an additional opportunity: to move LIPA's voice telephony from ISDN to a more up-to-date SIP trunking solution, pre-empting the imminent Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) switch-off.

Daisy's existing, trusted relationship with LIPA, dating back to the deployment of Skype for Business, made them an obvious choice for this new project. As well as having deep, in-built knowledge of LIPA's IT estate, the Daisy team was able to work seamlessly with the institute's own small but highly experienced in-house tech team.

ⓘ AT A GLANCE

Company:
Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts (LIPA)

Industry: Education

Sites: 1

Employees: 100-200

Objectives:
- Consolidate communication channels into Microsoft Teams
- Update voice telephony from ISDN to SIP trunking ahead of the PSTN switch-off
- Find a more cost-effective solution

Solutions:
- Unified Communications

Products:
- SIP trunking
- Direct routing of external telephony into Microsoft Teams

Results:
- Future-proofed their telephony against the PSTN switch-off
- Call cost savings
- Greater productivity and ease of use
- Removal of on-site servers has led to reduced power usage and removed the need for costly hardware maintenance and upgrades
- Optimised existing investments in hardware such as headsets

The Solution

Daisy worked with LIPA to migrate their voice telephony from the incumbent ISDN provider to a Daisy SIP VoIP solution while direct routing technology enabled LIPA staff to make external voice calls through their familiar Microsoft Teams interface. The two physical servers that were used to deliver Skype for Business could now be relinquished in favour of Gamma's hosted service.

To leverage the greater unity offered by the system, LIPA's sixth-form college, which had previously shared its Skype for Business solution, was added to the new Teams-based arrangement. In addition to giving each sixth form faculty member their own Teams account, this allows key functions like presence technology to be enjoyed across both sites.

As well as designing and implementing the migration process, Daisy provides other ongoing services to assist LIPA with future upgrades and the adoption of new functionality. The rest is handled by LIPA's internal IT resource. Daisy's approach also allowed LIPA to maximise its existing investment in Polycom handsets and other hardware, eventually combining these with USB headsets.

The Result

LIPA's migration to a unified, Teams-based communication system has yielded substantial call cost savings – a clear win for an organisation with a large international student base. In addition, users also enjoy far greater convenience and productivity. The removal of physical on-site servers has reduced power usage and the need to maintain costly hardware, providing an additional win on the environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) front.

The project also creates an opportunity to migrate LIPA's primary and secondary school campuses to the new platform as soon as their existing telephony contracts end.

"I'd like to extend a big thank you to the Daisy team for their efforts in going 'above and beyond' during the project. It was invaluable having them there, working alongside us."

Ben Faulkner,
ICT Manager,
Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts

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