



INTERACTIVE INTELLIGENCE
Deliberately Innovative

Case Study

Summary

Customer: North Central Michigan College



Headquarters: Petoskey, MI

Industry: Education

Product(s) Replaced:

- Mitel PBX

Number of Users:

- Contact Center Agents: 0
- Business Users: 160

Challenge: Make faculty more accessible to students via new features such as presence management and follow-me; expand telephony system to cost-effectively support adjunct faculty.

Product(s) Deployed:

- *Customer Interaction Center*[®] (CIC)

Benefits:

- \$11,000 saved yearly in consultant costs
- Projected savings of \$30,000 to \$50,000 compared to traditional phone system installation in new building
- Increased interaction between students, full-time faculty, and adjunct staff for improved institutional performance

All-in-One IP Communications Software Suite Helps Faculty and Students Connect

Software-based architecture, along with presence management and follow-me capabilities, enhance student-faculty communications while reducing costs

About North Central Michigan College

North Central Michigan College is an open-door community college based in Petoskey, Michigan. Through its University Center partnerships, students can take courses leading to certificates, and bachelor's and master's degrees from participating universities. NCMC's Institute for Business & Industry Training offers non-credit job skills training tailored to meet individual needs. In addition to its main campus in Petoskey, NCMC offers classes, academic advising, testing and other services in Cheboygan, Gaylord and East Jordan. For more information, call (888) 298-6605.

www.ncmich.edu

The Challenge

A key measure of most educational institutions' performance is students' ability to regularly consult with professors. For North Central Michigan College (NCMC), the goal of accessibility to instructors was being hampered by its antiquated Mitel PBX phone system.

The PBX system included about 240 phones on NCMC's main campus in Petoskey, Michigan, and the satellite campus in Gaylord. However, while there were enough phone extensions for full-time instructors, the system could not accommodate extensions for its adjunct faculty, nor could it support phones in each classroom. In addition, the system did not have conference calling, and offered a rudimentary voicemail system that could be accessed only at the user's phone.

"Our Mitel phone system was at the end of its life span and it would have been cost-prohibitive to add phone extensions for our adjunct faculty and in every classroom," said Glenn Cerny, the former dean of technology and business services for NCMC (now VP and CFO for Schoolcraft College in Livonia, Michigan). "In addition to the system's inability to scale, the lack of voicemail or any kind of follow-me capability made it very hard for students and instructors to connect with each other. If an instructor's phone rang and he or she wasn't there to answer it, students were left with the only option of continually calling back."

The difficulty of reaching instructors was amplified by the fact that many of NCMC's students are adults who could not always be on campus during a teacher's established office hours. "We wanted to help our faculty, full and part-time, be more accessible to our students, many of whom are working and have families," said NCMC's professor of marketing and management, Chet Jessick. "These students often need to reach instructors outside of traditional office hours."

The lack of rich telephony services for adjunct faculty also hampered instructors' ability to network. "We wanted to build better relationships between full-time faculty and adjunct faculty, and with our students," Jessick said. "Our previous system did not support these efforts."

The Solution

Cerny and Eric Grandstaff, the school's recently retired associate dean for academic and administrative technologies, began researching communications solutions. "We wanted to eliminate the need for physical phones to provide extensions for adjunct faculty," Cerny said. "We wanted a way for these instructors to send calls to their cell phones or home phones – wherever they happened to be." Therefore, Cerny and Grandstaff sought a software solution with presence management capabilities.

Also on Cerny and Grandstaff's list was voicemail that could be delivered to faculty via email, thus eliminating the need to constantly check messages. In addition, Cerny sought a system that could automatically distribute mass messages when needed – for example, if classes were to be canceled due to inclement weather.

Cerny and Grandstaff solicited requests-for-proposals and on-site demos from Interactive Intelligence, Mitel, and ShorTel. The Interactive Intelligence solution, *Customer Interaction Center™* (CIC), was an all-in-one IP communications software suite with single-platform architecture and inherent multichannel processing designed to eliminate the cost and complexity introduced by multipoint products.

"CIC was the obvious winner though it forced us to adjust our mindset, which was totally based on the hardware system we currently had in place." Cerny said. "After analyzing the benefits of an open, software-based system – especially the fact that it would allow us to create extensions without relying on physical phones – this architecture made perfect sense."

NCMC deployed CIC for voicemail, unified messaging, presence management, conferencing, and follow-me features. About 160 people, including full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and college administrative staff use CIC across all school departments on the Petoskey and Gaylord campuses.

The Benefits

"As soon as CIC was deployed we saw an increase in interaction between students and faculty," Jessick said. "Students said how great it was that they no longer had to remember several numbers for a single instructor. And as soon as faculty realized they could receive voicemail messages by email and set up follow-me so they could get calls anywhere, they were sold on the solution."

When the school began planning for its move into a new building, the additional benefits of CIC's software-based IP architecture became apparent.

"Based on calculations associated with our upcoming move, we expect to save between \$30,000 and \$50,000 in installation and hardware costs that we would've incurred with a traditional phone system," Cerny said. "We're already experiencing ongoing savings of about \$11,000 a year by eliminating consultant fees associated with setting up and changing phone lines. In addition, the phones we had to use with the Mitel system cost \$500 each, but because CIC interoperates with a multitude of phone brands we can now use Polycom phones, which cost us only \$100 apiece."

Jessick has personally experienced the benefits of CIC's follow-me feature. "I can now take calls from students regardless of where I am," Jessick said. "And these benefits haven't just helped me and our full-time faculty. CIC has gone a long way toward making our adjunct faculty feel like a more integral part of the college community – greater access has led to improved collaboration among us all for maximum institutional performance."

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Interactive Intelligence, Inc. (Nasdaq: ININ) offers unified business communications solutions for contact center automation, enterprise IP telephony, and business process automation. More than 3,500 organizations worldwide currently benefit from the company's open, all-in-one IP communications software suite, which can be deployed as a premise-based or communications-as-a-service (CaaS) solution.

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