

ShoreTel and Palisades Charter High School



High School Puts a Phone in Every Classroom for Heightened Security and Improved Responsiveness



CHALLENGE

- Palisades Charter High School wanted a telephone system with greater flexibility and custom features that the school could manage on its own from in-house. The high school also wanted additional security features to improve emergency responsiveness.

SOLUTION

- ShoreTel provided a comprehensive solution including ShoreGear voice switches, ShorePhone IP telephones, and custom software integration, along with ShoreTel's ShoreWare Emergency Notification Application.

BENEFITS

- Student and facility security is enhanced with the ShoreWare Emergency Notification Application
- Teachers have access to a telephone in their classrooms when they need it, but custom call handling features keep the phones from interrupting class time.
- With the flexibility of the ShoreTel IP Unified Communications system, changes can be made from in-house, and administrators can quickly accommodate teachers' requests.
- ShoreTel's IP Unified Communications system reduces teachers' administrative time, freeing them to focus on teaching.



ShoreTel's Pure IP Unified Communications (UC) Solution Allows Personalized Call Handling and Enables Teachers to be More Effective

A Need for Simplified, Unified Communications

Palisades Charter High School is a financially independent, comprehensive four-year high school. Its scenic views of the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Monica mountains are matched only by the school's long history of high academic standards and educational excellence. The school wanted a new telephone system that would be easy and efficient to manage in-house, meet the unique unified communications requirements of the educational environment, and enhance the school's efficiency and effectiveness in responding to emergency situations.

The Solution

The school looked at unified communications solutions from Cisco, Nortel, and ShoreTel®. With priority on emergency responsiveness features, cost-effectiveness, ability to customize, ease of use and management, and fail-over capabilities, Palisades Charter High School chose ShoreTel.

"ShoreTel was the most cost-effective in terms of both initial costs and long-term total cost of ownership," said Maisha-Cole Perri, Technology Coordinator for the school. "But the real business benefit of ShoreTel is the fact that it has so many features that simply help teachers do their jobs better."

With the help of integration partner Enterprise Communications Solutions, ShoreTel provided Palisades Charter High School with seven ShoreGear® voice switches. The system has made it possible for the school to have a telephone in every classroom, and more than 180 ShorePhone™ IP telephones have been deployed, including 110, 230, and 560 models. ShoreTel further unified internal communications with the school's emergency notification response system, and custom software development services added additional features that addressed the school's unique requirements.

Results

Securing the Campus and Community during Emergencies

The ShoreTel IP Unified Communications system provides calling party information to the 911 service during an emergency. Taking



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this one step further, Palisades Charter High School is also using ShoreTel's ShoreWare® Emergency Notification Application, which provides internal notification to designated individuals that a 911 call has been placed. Alerts include the name, extension number and exact location of the caller. Whenever a ShorePhone IP telephone is used to dial 911, the system automatically notifies the school's Executive Director, Director of Communications, School Police Officer, and Dean of Discipline of the call. Each person has a unique and important role to play, and by receiving simultaneous notification, they can immediately create an appropriate and unified response to the emergency. Built-in messaging allows them to send text messages to each other from their desktops, further improving their ability to coordinate a timely response.

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Another system capability that proves invaluable in dealing with emergencies is ShoreTel's auto-attendant. While the Los Angeles fires were burning, the auto-attendant system allowed Perri to change greetings on the fly.

“We were able to go into auto-attendant and make emergency notifications available to the community and parents – urgent information such as where buses were going with students,” said Perri. “The school was also a shelter during the fires and we posted information about that. We've now developed a plan to change messages remotely whenever necessary so updates are posted immediately.”

Meeting Teacher Requirements

ShoreTel Professional Services implemented a customized feature for Palisades Charter High School, which automatically configures call handling modes for teachers. For instance, when a teacher is in class, the phone is automatically put in an unavailable status, so class is not interrupted with a ringing telephone. Instead, calls are automatically routed to the

teacher's voicemail box, and a blinking light on the telephone indicates that there is a message waiting so the call can be returned when it's convenient for the teacher.

“The new ShoreTel system allows teachers to efficiently communicate with their communities, including parents, staff, students and administrators,” said Perri. “ShoreTel helped us customize the system so that classroom telephones don't ring during precious class time, yet the phone is available all the time for calls to anyone inside or outside the school, including 911. The system simply enables teachers to do their jobs better.”

Improving Staff and Teacher Responsiveness

Palisades Charter High School is using ShoreTel's hunt groups capability to ensure all calls are answered by a live person rather than voicemail. Calls ring multiple extensions in a specified sequence or all at once. For example, calls into the main telephone number can be picked up by several front office administrators. The same is true for calls into the finance office and student attendance reporting clerks. This feature ensures that each caller reaches the person they need quickly, enhancing the school's overall responsiveness and communications with the entire community.

The ShorePhone IP telephones notify teachers with a blinking light when they have a message waiting, which means parent concerns will not go unrecognized. In addition, The ShoreTel UC system provides every Palisades Charter High School employee with a personal voicemail box, which was not available with the old system. Administrators can send a message through this system to all teachers or groups of individuals, rather than counting on teachers to pick up messages from their office mailboxes. This unifies communications and improves responsiveness by the school, while reducing the administrative burden for teachers since they only have to check one place – their ShoreTel voicemail box – to obtain all of their messages.



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Saying Yes to Requests

Palisades Charter High School uses ShoreWare Director for management of the ShoreTel system. It is a browser-based management interface that provides access to the system from anywhere on the network, enabling easy and efficient management, including moves, adds and changes.

“With the old phone system, we had a hard time completing moves, adds and changes,” said Perri. “With the ShoreTel IP Unified Communications system, we don’t even need a technician on-site to handle these tasks – I take care of these things myself. It’s nice to be able to update things ourselves. The ShoreTel system allows us to say yes to requests that help teachers be more responsive and effective, whereas before we’d have to wait for someone to come in and make requested changes.”