

## PEIRCE COLLEGE KEEPS ITS LINES OPEN



Philadelphia-based Peirce College® is distinguished by its online and campus presence, as well as their emphasis on one-on-one communication between students and staff throughout the accelerated seven-week courses of its Bachelor's and Associate degree programs. Enabling personal contact, student/faculty collaboration, audio conferencing and call center operations is critical—no matter what.

“Phones are often the preferred media for our students to communicate with the College,” explained Christopher Duffy, Chief Information Officer (CIO) of Peirce College. “One day of downtime could translate into a huge negative impact for our students. That’s not an acceptable situation for us.”

### A Phased Approach

Peirce set key priorities in a phased approach to immediately improve the functionality of its communications system; to meet or exceed 99.999% availability; allow expansion with the school’s needs and budget; and set the stage for a fully redundant communication system.



The first stage of the plan centered on Avaya’s S8500 Media Server, which supports Communication Manager (CM), Modular Messaging, IP Softphone, Expanded Meet-Me Conferencing, Call Center and Accounting Software, and an EAS server. The second stage, now underway, moves the S8500 and its components to an off-site location that it will share with Peirce’s voice and data service provider. An S8700 Media Server will take the place of the S8500, providing the school with full redundancy for business continuity and disaster recovery.

### Functionality and Benefits

The components of the communication system were selected to deliver functionality in clearly defined areas. Calls can be placed and received through telephones or computers using a simple Graphical User Interface (GUI) or common desktop applications. Voice and fax messaging capabilities ensure that messages are accessible 24/7 from any telephone,



cell phone, fax or PC. Audio conferencing is enabled for up to 300 participants without adding per-call access fees. Customer service is enhanced through access to live operators or online interactive questions/answers as well as automatic callbacks, call forwarding, priority calling and personal station access.

For administrators, both staffing and time management functions have benefited from calling metrics generated by

the communication system. The metrics, which identify factors ranging from call volume to call disposition and time to resolution, provide administrators with the hard data needed to effectively redeploy staff, adjust service hours, or streamline systems for problem resolution.

### Partnering for the Long Haul

Peirce College partnered with Consultedge on the multi-phase project. Mr. Duffy explained, “We wanted to work with a company that understood our objectives, not only for immediate communications functionality but also for long-term business continuity. Consultedge assisted in developing a solution that meets both objectives.”



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