CUSTOMER BACKGROUND

Founded in 1988 along with four colleges, the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) have emerged as the UAE’s largest applied higher educational institution with 17 modern technology-oriented campuses serving more than 17,000 students throughout the UAE.

Having gained a well-respected reputation for innovative and job-focused experiential learning, HCT offers a wide range of programmes in many academic fields such as Applied Communications, Business, Computer Information Science, Engineering Technology & Science among others.

All these programmes are relevant to UAE’s fast growing economy. They are designed in consultation with business and industry leaders to ensure that HCT students’ skills are job-relevant, to the highest standards, and with constant monitoring to ensure they are at the cutting-edge of industry standards and technological change.

CHALLENGES

HCT has a growing community made up of thousands of students and educators who want to collaborate regardless of their distance, location or connectivity type; and having a unified network to support this requirement became a key objective for HCT regardless of how challenging it was.

With more than 17 branches and campuses spread all over the UAE serving more than 7500 users, the deployed telephony setup was not capable of supporting the evolving needs for future growth. It was an obsolete multivendor setup with compatibility and integration issues.

In addition to that, the WAN links between HCT branches and offices were highly utilised and in need for major upgrades to cater for voice, data and video communications across the WAN.

It was the right time for HCT to embark on a major technology refresh and a new unified communication setup supporting their vision of one seamless resilient network capable of meeting their communication needs.

BENEFITS

- Improved collaboration from students, faculty and staff to collaborate anytime, anywhere
- Improved productivity and efficiency
- Lower TCO

CHALLENGES

- Communication and collaboration on-off campus
- Travel and commuting expenses
- Multi-vendor management complexity
- Offering new services on top of the existing PBX
HCT recognised the advantage of replacing their obsolete telephony systems with the latest Unified Communications Solution. The ideal setup was to deploy centralised communication servers in the head office with high availability feature and voice gateways in branches to handle voice and data communication and to connect to the HCT head office over Etisalat’s MPLS cloud.

With the right WAN network design and bandwidth upgrades, HCT is now able to get high-quality voice and video calls that matches the quality over the LAN or PSTN network. The deployed solution enabled new ways of communication and collaboration for students and staff facilitating work off campus.

Etisalat followed a holistic approach to the design, deployment and end-to-end management guaranteeing service uptime and business continuity. The service is monitored round the clock days from Etisalat’s world-class network operation and maintenance centre providing complete visibility on the service, helping us meet Etisalat’s stringent SLAs (Service Level Agreements) signed with HCT.
RESULTS AND BENEFITS

The project has delivered significant benefits to HCT, including:

- Advanced collaboration capabilities for students, teachers and academic communities
- Operational efficiency: Whether it is a support requirement or placing a new order, HCT will get one-stop shop for its entire Data & Voice requirement including connectivity and equipment
- Freeing up HCT staff: As a direct benefit of managed services, HCT in-house technology experts can now focus on projects related to their core business rather than worrying about technology and business continuity
- Reduced Total Cost of Ownership for telecom service management

AWARDS

The project was recognised by two reputable bodies and won two awards - one local and the other global.

- Unified Communication Implementation of the year from Network Middle East Innovation Awards
- Enterprise Service Innovation award from Global Telecom Business (GTB)