



Enabling BCU to Respond to Applicant Demands

At a glance

Customer: Birmingham City University

Challenge: Clearing is one of the most important calendar points for many Universities; an opportunity for universities to fill available places on their courses and maximise student numbers. Unfortunately, BCU experienced significant call centre issues in past years as previous providers didn't meet the level of service or ability to deliver as required.

Outcome:

- Agility & quicker time to market via Cloud service
- Automatic Scaling - Paying for what they use
- 99.999% uptime SLA
- Confidence no call will go unanswered & maximise recruitment potential
- The project will provide the template of the quality they wish to achieve in future projects

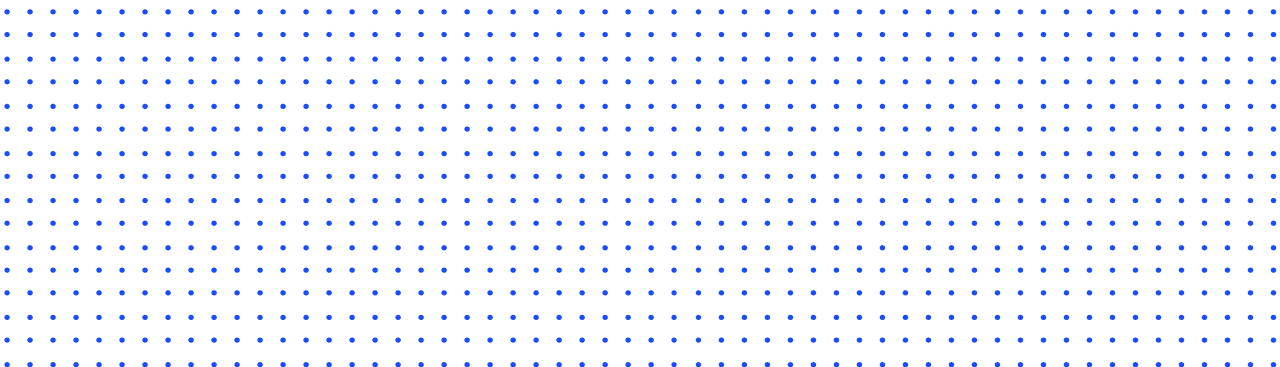
Solution: Clearing Cloud Telephony based on Webex Contact Centre & Webex calling with a managed service backed off to Brightcloud.

Background

Birmingham City University (BCU) is a higher education provider, located in the heart of Birmingham. With over 29,000 students from around 100 countries, BCU is a large and diverse university with a focus on practice-based learning, offering a wide variety of vocational based courses. The university has two main campuses serving four faculties, and offers courses in art and design, business, computing, education, engineering, English, healthcare, law, the performing arts, social sciences, and technology.

Its focus on practical skills and professional relevance is producing some of the country's most employable graduates: with the university ranking 7th in the region, and 94th nationally in The Times Good University Guide 2023. The University puts £270 million into the regional economy and supports thousands of jobs in the area.

Matt Peers, Senior Project Manager Birmingham City University: "Although we have students from over 80 countries, more than 60% of our students are all based and grew up in or around Birmingham. So, we are an integral part to the city and the opportunities of the local community that many of those students have relied on."



Challenge

Clearing is one of the most important calendar points for any University. It is an opportunity for universities to fill any places they still have on their courses, making clearing their biggest chance to maximise recruitment. The clearing process can be open for several months, but usually the bulk of activity is front loaded to the first few weeks, or even within the first two days.

As a popular university in the UK, BCU is familiar with using clearing as a key form of the university's recruitment process. During the clearing period, its IT infrastructure must be strong enough to handle spikes in student applications.

Historically, previous suppliers had not provided a robust enough platform solution to deal with high volumes of traffic. In past years, this resulted in significant call centre issues which impacted applicant enquiries and student numbers. Despite clearing taking place once a year, it's a critical period for universities and it's vital to have the necessary infrastructure in place.

The pandemic forced colleges and schools to calculate exam results in an alternate way, placing a greater strain on the clearing process. "The culmination of recruitment pressures from Covid-19 added to the demands on the clearing process last year. Most notably, 2022 was the first year since the beginning of the pandemic that all students entered clearing after having sat real exams," said **Matt Peers**.

Solution

BCU's previous providers had been unable to deliver the right services to overcome the challenges clearing can bring. As a result of BCU's needs not being met, it partnered with Logicalis in 2022 to find an innovative & flexible solution.

The challenge the university faced was to handle high demand and provide a high-quality service. To help BCU gain more control, Logicalis presented a cloud solution based on Webex Contact Centre with a managed service backed off to BrightCloud.

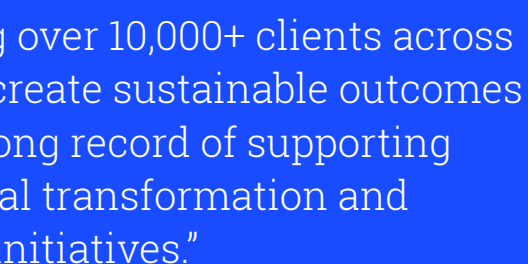
The partnership strived to deliver a cloud-based, resilient on-site contact centre that is also able to operate in a hybrid mode. This flexibility allows the call centre to stay on-site whilst support and additional faculty functionality remains offsite. Operating completely cloud-based offers the agility and scalability needed during peak times.

The solution allowed BCU to load test before go-live dates and automatically scale up or down depending on the number of calls from prospective students. **With a 99.999% uptime Service Level Agreement (SLA) the university can rely on the call centre to support its recruitment strategy for 2024.**

Logicalis and BCU first partnered in 2009 on a different project where the team recognised a synergy between the parties. "The relationship we have with the Logicalis team has allowed us to work together, and form a true partnership to deliver results," said **Matt Peers**.

"As well as a solid reputation for helping institutions like our own, Logicalis took the time to fully immerse themselves into our business, and the challenges we were up against, and deliver an unmatched solution!"

"The Logicalis team are very good at understanding us. They take the time to listen, build a strong relationship, and show value at every stage of the journey."



"Logicalis has a history helping over 10,000+ clients across a range of industry sectors, to create sustainable outcomes through technology. With a strong record of supporting higher education through digital transformation and infrastructure transformation initiatives."

Outcome

In 2022, BCU received and processed its highest volumes of applicant enquiries in the shortest amount of time on record. Through partnering with Logicalis, BCU could stress test the solution, and run load test indications. BCU was able to ensure its platforms and solutions could scale in response to increased demands.

When coming up against challenges in the process to deliver a solution, the teams were able to effectively work around it with valuable conversation. **“The strength and the quality of the Logicalis approach to their relationships allowed trust to build quickly and explains why their customer success angle is so strong. When we were tested, it proved to be a highly valuable exercise,”** explained Matt Peers.

Regarding future developments, Peers says that this project will “provide the baseline and the template for the kind of quality they wish to achieve.”

“I truly believe that without the support and expertise of Logicalis, BCU wouldn’t have been able to process that level of applicant enquiries, resulting in places lost and the impact to the university and young people’s lives,” Peers added.

“BCU selected Logicalis for its ability to build and deploy a tailored range of solutions to support its business objectives and desired outcomes.”

