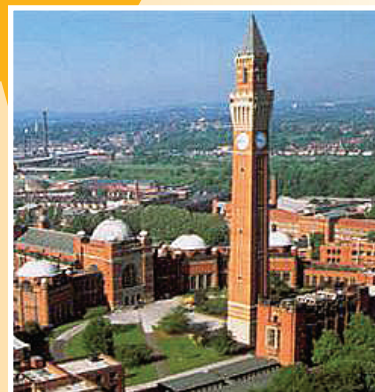


4C 'a means of constant support' to the University of Birmingham

The University of Birmingham first opened its doors in 1900 and is notable for being Britain's first red brick university. Located across two main campus sites, with a School of Dentistry in the city centre, the University has many diverse communication needs to fulfil in order to offer a high quality service to its 26,000 students and 4,000 overseas students, plus the 3,500 staff who work in a variety of roles across the different sites.



4C was called in to make an evaluation and overhaul of its existing telephony strategy

Offering the highest service levels

Although the University already had all the key components in place necessary for its routine telecommunication requirements, senior management felt that, with technology ever changing, an evaluation and overhaul of its existing telephony strategy was timely. The key drivers for the project were:

1. Many systems in the University were in need of an upgrade.
2. Many systems were also approaching their maximum operating capacity.
3. Due to recent turnover of staff at the University, a physical audit was needed to establish the current situation.
4. The University needed to develop a telephony infrastructure which offered the highest level of service and features to its users while realising maximum benefit from previous investments.

With many clients from their portfolio operating in the HE sector, 4C Strategies has extensive experience of the communications issues that affect modern educational establishments and so was an ideal choice for the University of Birmingham. The independent consultancy was initially retained to undertake a comprehensive audit of its telecommunications infrastructure. Following the initial audit, 4C was then asked to develop a full and detailed telecommunications strategy that would meet the University's evolving needs.

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As many staff had moved or left the University relatively recently, the first stage of the project involved carrying out a comprehensive physical audit to determine the current situation with regards to the equipment, personnel and systems that were currently in place. This included a full inspection of the cabling infrastructure, detailed audits of all equipment and systems, plus an analysis of all costs and contracts at all sites.

As a result of the audit, 4C was able to produce a comprehensive database that was delivered in web format on a CD ROM. This database provided an invaluable reference resource for both the strategy development element of the assignment and the University's own day to day operation of the infrastructure.

An additional output of the audit phase was an electronic model of the University's calling profile which enabled 4C to benchmark the University's tariffs. This model has subsequently proved an invaluable economic resource by allowing the University to model the effect of different tariffs from new suppliers before making a final decision.

Satisfying all the criteria

The audit gave 4C the information that they needed to move onto the next stage of the project: developing a comprehensive telecommunications strategy for the University that would meet their needs. However, the assignment provided a number of challenges since the resultant strategy had to satisfy a number of competing criteria. These included the importance of the University developing a modern telephony infrastructure which would offer the highest level of service and features to its users, whilst at the same time realising maximum benefits from previous investments that the University had made.

With valuable information provided by the initial physical audit, 4C was able to produce a comprehensive action plan. The document was carefully structured to identify tactical developments which would deliver 'quick wins'. It also laid out the detailed strategic investment plan, timescale and resource requirements necessary to ensure the success of the project.

The University of Birmingham was so pleased with the way that the project was carried out, and with the strategy that was delivered, that 4C now has a long term support agreement which will enable the University to continue to receive focused independent advice during the implementation phase of the strategy project.

Telecommunications Manager, Gail Eagles feels that 4C has made a critical contribution to ensuring that an efficient and economical new strategy is employed at the University and explains why it was decided to extend the relationship.

"4C's involvement with the University of Birmingham has enabled savings on tariffs, equipment purchases and maintenance agreements. We use them on an annual basis as a means of constant support and also on specific projects where their expertise and time commitment supplements our sometimes overstretched resource."

To find out how you can make more of your communications by having a clear strategy in place, contact 4C to arrange for an initial no-obligation fact finding consultation. **Visit our website www.4c.co.uk, call 01858 438 938 or email office@4c.co.uk.**

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