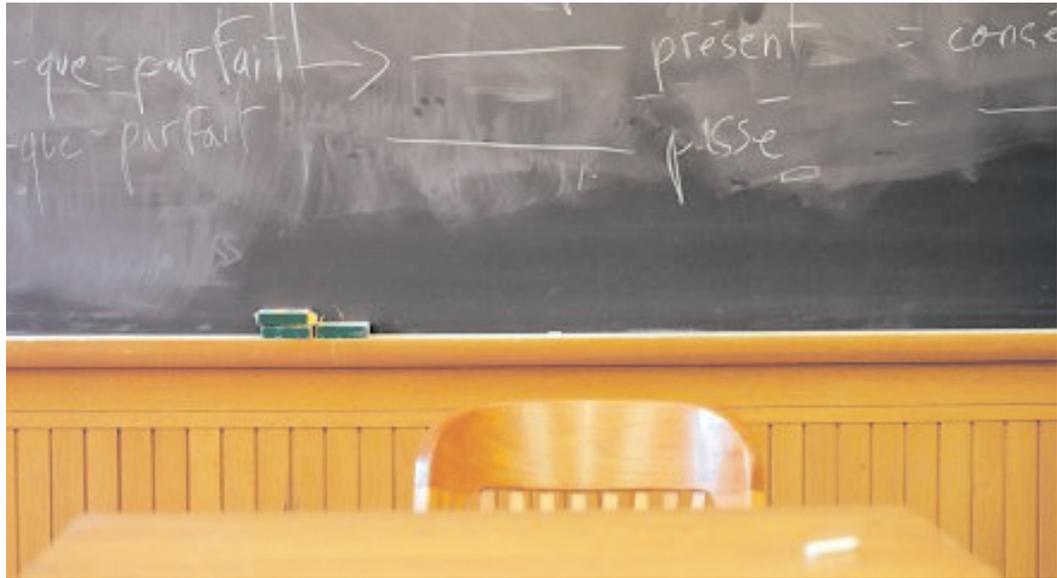




Multi-Media IVR System Based on PIKA Helps K-12 Schools Combat Absenteeism



With innovative IVR installations in 26 countries, C3 Ltd. has penetrated all sizes of organizations across many industry sectors. In addition to corporate and call center markets, C3 has developed solutions for pop-culture phenomena such as TV voting and downloading ring tones.

"We do have a huge range of products," confirms Sue Hunt, Marketing Director at C3. "Our customers include fixed operators, mobile operators, content providers, retailers, banks, local governments, call centers, corporations, and schools." Recently, C3 developed a new product for a partner that wanted to target schools in the UK. For voice processing on the new product, which is called VoiceAttend, C3 chose PIKA's analog boards. The VoiceAttend product meets more than schools' logistical needs - thanks to PIKA, it also fits within their budgetary constraints.

Jumping at the Opportunity

C3's customer's primary goal was to enter the education market for the first time. To do so, it targeted a painful reality of UK schools today: absenteeism is a growing problem.

Customer: C3 supplies converged communications platforms for all IVR and multimedia requirements. Its products are telephone-centric and they aim at increasing productivity.

Challenge: To develop an IVR product designed to combat absenteeism in K-12 schools throughout the UK.

Solution: PIKA analog voice processing boards integrated into C3's Apcentia - a Windows-based technology platform.

Benefits:

- Cost savings enabled a cost-effective solution to be built for the cash-conscious education market.
- PIKA API reduced implementation time to 1/3 compared to other board suppliers.
- Flexibility allows solution to co-exist alongside many other applications and software.
- Adaptable solution with significant potential in other markets and applications.
- Excellent technical support with quick and comprehensive responses to queries.

"School absenteeism is a big problem here," says Hunt. "It's in the papers a lot right now, and government initiatives are being driven down to schools, which have been given targets to reduce the number of unauthorized absences."

Partly fueled by some extreme cases - such as one in which a student did not attend school and was then found murdered - the demand for a solution is high, and C3's customer wanted to move quickly.

Not satisfied with its existing supplier for analog voice processing, "We carried out a full alternative supplier assessment," says Wayne Starsmore, Technical Director at C3. "We like PIKA's product range, its price point, and its relatively simple API."

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The PIKA boards were integrated into C3's own programming language, which in turn integrates with MIS software used by schools. Starsmore credits PIKA's simple API - and PIKA's excellent technical support - for helping C3 deliver the opportune solution in a fraction of the time.

"The PIKA API took one-third of the time to implement compared to other suppliers," he reports. In addition, "PIKA provides full technical support that is much better than that offered by other established vendors. PIKA offers a quick and comprehensive response to queries."

Not only did that quick turnaround help C3's customer to attack the Education sector early in the market window, PIKA's price point also made the solution feasible, says Hunt. "The education sector has budgetary restrictions. With PIKA, we were able to develop a solution at the right cost and scale."

A Path to New Markets

In keeping with schools' budgetary concerns, C3's VoiceAttend product is modular and can be tailored to the requirements of individual schools, which simply add different modules to the product.

For example, twice daily, the truancy module automatically checks a school's computerized roll call and informs parents - by phone or by text - if their child is absent. Parents can also respond by either phone or text. "PIKA cards dial the number and play the message, determine whether the line is engaged, answered, or not answered, and PIKA cards can also record the call," Hunt explains.

Another module with strong cross-market potential is a bullying module, she adds. "This module disguises a person's voice so they can report bullying incidents without fear of recrimination."

Hunt sees a number of other possibilities for the new product. "In UK schools, an awful lot of paperwork is generated to send parents letters - such as about fundraising events, emergencies or school closures. The VoiceAttend product allows information to be programmed into a database and broadcast to parents via phone or text, so it could significantly reduce that paperwork."

In addition, she notes that, "Many schools have no MIS software and still do a great deal of registration and roll call manually - so this system could help schools to automate more of their registration process."

The project has also helped C3 to pursue an important aspect of its business and marketing plan: selling systems through third-parties like its VoiceAttend partner. "This is a bigger market for us," Hunt confirms. And, she believes that the new system will help C3 target a range of customers in other industries.

"Based on our market research, the bullying model has potential in other sectors," she offers as an example. "Bullying is also an issue in the corporate market, and we're looking at developing a 'lone worker' solution. Employees who feel threatened could complain while remaining anonymous."

About PIKA Technologies

PIKA Technologies designs and manufactures computer plug in voice cards and software that connect a computer system to both TDM- and IP-based networks to provide advanced voice services. For almost two decades PIKA Technologies has been serving companies around the world that require voice cards to design sophisticated phone services for recording systems, voice services applications, and PC-PBX systems. The company has built a reputation for delivering innovative products and exceptional technical support by working closely with its customers. Headquartered in Ottawa, ON, Canada, the company has ranked in The Branham300, an authoritative ranking of successful Canadian high tech firms, for five consecutive years. Visit www.pikatechnologies.com or call +1-613-591-1555 for more information.



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