

AUDIOCODES CASE STUDY



CURRO

Customer: Curro Schools

Website: www.curro.co.za

Location: South Africa

Industry: Education

Customer Profile:

Curro is one of the largest networks of independent schools in South Africa.

Challenges:

- Support migration from legacy voice systems to Skype for Business
- Integration with critical school announcement and bell systems
- Remote management and zero-touch installation of devices

AudioCodes Solutions:

- IP phones: [445HD](#), [440HD](#), [405HD](#)
- [CCE Edition](#)
- [One Voice Operations Center](#)
- [IP Phone Manager Pro](#)

Benefits:

- **Investment protection** - IP phones deployed with legacy solutions can continue to be used after migration to Skype for Business
- **Future-proof infrastructure** - providing support for Skype for Business today and ready for Microsoft Teams deployment in the future
- **Centralized management** - simplifying processes, saving time and costs
- **Lower communication costs** - using least cost routing to route PSTN calls over SIP trunk connections and making federated and internal Skype for Business calls
- **Pupil and staff safety** - seamless integration of critical systems such as school bells and intercom

CURRO SCHOOLS

On-premises voice connectivity for a Skype for Business Online cloud-based school communications network

Curro Schools selected AudioCodes One Voice products and solutions to deliver critical voice functionality when the school migrated to a Skype for Business Online based communications network. Curro deployed AudioCodes CCE to deliver on-premises PSTN connectivity. AudioCodes installed AudioCodes 400HD series IP phones in the school's call centers, admin offices and classrooms with One Voice Operations Center management system enabling centralized device and quality management and configuration of the entire deployment from a single location.

Background

Established in 1998, [Curro](#) is one of the largest networks of independent schools in South Africa. The network includes over 130 schools (from kindergarten to high school) and enrolls 50,000 students across the country.



Thanks to their extensive interoperability, AudioCodes IP phones work seamlessly in virtually any SIP-based communications environments.

AudioCodes IP phones could be shipped to the school and just need to be plugged in to the network socket without the need for an onsite engineer.



445HD IP Phone



Challenges

In recent years, Curro experienced rapid growth due to the acquisition of new schools and building new establishments as it expanded its portfolio. One of the results of this expansion was an increasingly complex communications infrastructure that became costly and difficult to manage. Curro's schools and customer service call centers were reliant on a number of disparate systems, including a Cisco-based hosted PBX solution supplied by a local service provider and a variety of standalone PBXs located at different sites. In addition, there was a need to integrate school bell systems and intercoms with the communications solutions.

It became apparent to Curro management that in order to maintain their reputation as leaders in technology innovation, communications had to be modernized and integrated in order to meet future needs. A future-proof unified communications solution that would provide all necessary functionality and allow a gradual and cost-effective migration to Skype for Business and, eventually, to Microsoft Teams was sought. In addition, Curro required network management processes to be streamlined and operating costs reduced.

To achieve this, Curro was looking for a solution that offered the ability to manage the entire voice network centrally and deploy equipment at remote sites without the need to dispatch an engineer every time. Because of the critical importance of voice communications, it was important that the ability to proactively monitor voice quality and analyze user experience was embedded in the new system. Maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction would be dependent on this.

Solution

Curro was already an active user of Microsoft Office 365, thus the decision to adopt Skype for Business Online as its organization-wide communications platform was a simple one. Not only does Skype for Business Online deliver a wealth of productivity-enhancing unified communications and collaboration functionality, but, because it is a cloud-based solution, capital expenditure is lowered and management overheads reduced. It was also significant that Microsoft offers substantial discounts to customers in the education sector.

With Skype for Business Online, call control and user management are handled in the cloud. However, Curro still needed a solution for IP phone devices used in offices and classrooms and for on-premises connectivity with the local PSTN for incoming and outgoing calls. For these, Curro turned to AudioCodes whose [One Voice for Microsoft 365](#) portfolio includes products and solutions that help accelerate Skype for Business deployments, whether on-premises, hybrid or exclusively in the cloud.

Curro needed IP phones for its schools' principals, teaching staff and administration offices, as well as in each classroom. In classrooms, the IP phones are critical for enabling emergency calling and communication with school admin staff, other classrooms and schools. They also play broadcast messages from the principal's office. The phones are integrated with the schools' scheduling system so that bells to mark the end and beginning of lessons can be sounded remotely.

Curro deployed AudioCodes CCE Edition to facilitate connectivity with local telecom service providers.

Mediant SBC enables Curro to continue using its legacy telephony solution during the migration process, thereby eliminating the need for a disruptive "rip-and-replace" style migration.



CCE Edition



IP Phone Manager Pro

AudioCodes offers a range of high definition IP phones suitable for different functional requirements. They are fully certified for use with Skype for Business with full support for Skype for Business presence indication. Curro selected the high-end 440HD and 445HD models for the admin blocks. For the classrooms, the entry-level 405HD model was used. To simplify the calling process, the classroom phones were preprogrammed with speed dial buttons to enable one-click calls to the school office and emergency services.

Thanks to their extensive interoperability, AudioCodes IP phones work seamlessly in virtually any SIP-based communications environment. This enabled Curro to install the IP phones and use them with its existing telephony solutions until the school was ready for migration to Skype for Business. At that point, all that was needed was a firmware upgrade (carried out remotely using OVOC – see below) to convert the phones to Skype for Business compatible devices. In the future, when Curro migrates to Microsoft Teams, the same devices will be ready to work in that environment too.

The wide geographic distribution of Curro's schools presented a challenging management obstacle to be overcome. Installing, configuring, monitoring and troubleshooting devices located all over the country and beyond cost-effectively was a paramount consideration. Fortunately, Curro was able to take advantage of AudioCodes' One Voice Operations Center (OVOC) solution and, in particular, OVOC's IP Phone Manager Pro module. With its intuitive GUI, OVOC allows Curro to manage its voice network from a single centralized location. This includes real-time device monitoring, alarm displays and configuration of the entire AudioCodes network infrastructure. By creating predefined configuration templates, AudioCodes IP phones could be shipped to the school and just need to be plugged in to the network socket without the need for an onsite engineer. When the IP phones power up their configuration is automatically downloaded from the OVOC servers resulting in a zero-touch installation.

An important management feature is OVOC's support for multi-tenancy. Each individual school is defined as a tenant allowing each school to be managed separately thereby simplifying troubleshooting and reducing the error rate. Each school - or tenant - can view its own call quality information down to the level of the individual department and user as a result of full integration with Active Directory.

A further requirement for Curro's voice network was to enable connectivity with the PSTN for incoming and outgoing calls. With Microsoft's PSTN Calling facility unavailable in South Africa, Curro deployed AudioCodes CCE Edition to facilitate connectivity with local telecom service providers. AudioCodes CCE integrates Microsoft's Cloud Connector Edition software with AudioCodes' field-proven, Microsoft-certified Mediant session border controller (SBC) ensuring reliable PSTN connectivity for Curro's Skype for Business Online users, as well as seamless integration with its auto-attendant solution for incoming calls.

Thanks to its extensive interoperability, the Mediant SBC enables Curro to continue using its legacy telephony solution during the migration process, thereby eliminating the need for a disruptive "rip-and-replace" style migration. Once the migration is complete, the SBC continues providing secure and reliable connectivity with the local PSTN.

AudioCodes' IP phones, CCE appliances and management tools provide the basis of a reliable and future-proof voice infrastructure that ensures a high quality calling experience for our internal users and customers.

Barend Weideman,
Enterprise Solutions Architect at
Curro Holdings

Results

The combination of Skype for Business Online and AudioCodes One Voice portfolio has resulted in Curro having a future-proof communications solution which is reliable, easy to use and simple to manage. Among the core benefits offered by the AudioCodes solution are:

- **Investment protection** - IP phones deployed with legacy solutions can continue to be used after migration to Skype for Business
- **Future-proof infrastructure** - providing support for Skype for Business today and ready for Microsoft Teams deployment in the future
- **Centralized management** - simplifying processes, saving time and costs
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- **Pupil and staff safety** - seamless integration of critical systems such as school bells and intercom

"With our network of schools expanding rapidly we needed a voice solution that would keep up with the rate of growth without incurring unnecessary costs and delays," explained Barend Weideman, Enterprise Solutions Architect at Curro Holdings. "AudioCodes' IP phones, CCE appliances and management tools provide the basis of a reliable and future-proof voice infrastructure that ensures a high quality calling experience for our internal users and customers."

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09/24 V.2

