

8x8

The University of Bristol reinvents the student contact center on 8x8

The University of Bristol is one of the most popular and successful universities in the UK, ranked 61st in the world in the QS World University Rankings 2023. A member of the Worldwide Universities Network and the Russell Group of universities, Bristol is globally renowned for its high-quality teaching and leading-edge research..

The Challenge: Disconnected student service operations

The student experience is a key focus area for any university, but most critical is student welfare and wellbeing. In 2017, the University of Bristol re-evaluated every aspect of their student and staff welfare, wellbeing support, and provision.

As part of this effort, the university envisioned an entirely new contact center that integrated all its student services into one organization. Students would have only one number to call for any need, and they could reach an agent anytime, 24/7/365.

“We couldn’t accomplish this with our existing on-premises system,” says Kevin Thomas, Bristol’s Unified Communications Manager. “And we would have needed a massive increase in infrastructure to provide the number of seats needed for our expanded operations.”

The team felt that most providers didn’t understand the needs of an academic institution, such as a per-call pricing structure or providing predictable costs. Also, add-ons like social media support (an imperative for student services) proved too costly.

For more information, call 1 866 879 8647 or +44(0)333 043 8888 or visit 8x8.com.



Industry

Higher Education

Headquarters

Bristol, UK

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8x8 Product

8x8 Work and Contact Center

Channel Partner

Three Cherries

So Kevin and the team contacted [Three Cherries](#), a trusted partner of 8x8, for help. Three Cherries provided hands-on support from the beginning, which the team found very valuable. Three Cherries made the initial introduction to 8x8, and the team evaluated several cloud solutions.

“Even after the introduction, Three Cherries continued to ensure that the relationship developed, represented the interests of the University, and helped both parties understand each other’s culture and terminology. This enabled the relationship to develop quickly and constructively and achieve the tight deadlines,” says Kevin.

In the end, they selected [8x8 Contact Center](#), which provided a modern cloud solution with fixed costs, built-in omnichannel support, and rich analytics that could help further improve operations.

The Solution: One cloud contact center for all student needs

For Kevin and the IT team, rolling out 8x8 Contact Center was surprisingly easy. “Go live is always a very tense time,” says Kevin, “And for our new contact center, we had a hard deadline. We had to get people trained and used to the system before the start of term. But 8x8 was probably the most stress-free implementation I’ve ever had. It went brilliantly.”

8x8’s account and technical teams were on hand during the rollout to answer any questions and ensure that everything went smoothly. Kevin recalls, “Our 8x8 representatives were instrumental in making sure that the right people were on the right calls at the right time, so that we could deliver by our deadline.”

Initially, the university consolidated three service teams into the new unified contact center. One hundred and twenty members of the University of Bristol staff spread across three geographic areas work around the clock in three daily shifts. 8x8’s ease of use was a key factor in getting everyone up and running quickly and collaborating between shifts. Kevin says, “The 8x8 University and its videos have been an absolute godsend, really. They’ve been very, very helpful.”

Moreover, the representatives on call are a diverse group—not everyone is a professional customer service agent. Many are counselors, maintenance people, residence support staff, and the like, often with a high turnover rate. “The 8x8 platform is easy enough for these different individuals to learn to use, and learn to work together,” says Kevin. “This helps us provide a consistent level of service to our students, regardless of the reason for their call.”

8x8’s built-in analytics help the new contact center further drive quality and performance. “Our supervisors have been able to explore 8x8 Analytics on their own, without the need for IT to explain everything to them. That goes to show how easy the platform is to use.”

The Results: Data-driven action, and wisdom

8x8’s fixed cost structure has made it easier for the university to plan and evolve its service operations, migrating services over to 8x8 when it makes fiscal sense. “8x8 is now our default platform for any type of contact center,” says Kevin. “We’re looking into integrating with Microsoft Dynamics as well.”

8x8 will also become the university’s main outbound communications platform. Students will receive check-in alerts when they don’t attend class or haven’t submitted their coursework on time. Replies go to the contact center, which can then proactively address any welfare issues that the student may be experiencing. Kevin says, “Since the 1st of November, the services team has received 9,813 calls. Across all our 8x8 queues, we have received 43,869 calls and made 6,061 outbound calls.”

This data, and much more coming from the 8x8 platform is providing deep insight into the contact center’s operation. “We’re able to turn data from 8x8 into information, knowledge, and ultimately, wisdom,” says Kevin. “We’re gaining a much better understanding about what works for us and what works for the students.”

