

Lubavitch Mesivta of Chicago Success Story

A Study in Dependable Communications



Challenge

- Severely outdated and outgrown server-based phone system
- Multiple sets of separate and disparate modems, routers, and access points
- Costly maintenance of nine different micro-networks campus-wide

Solution

- 1 Gig fiber optic line, laid down just for the school
- Dedicated Internet Access (DIA), Wi-Fi, Hosted Voice, and on-premise equipment
- Extended network access and capacity, just in time for COVID shutdown

Results

- Seamless transition to distance learning, then back again post-pandemic
- Students returned without missing a beat in education or socialization
- Comprehensive customer support with immediate, expert response

Lessons in Higher Learning

As a widely respected high school preparing thousands of students for higher learning in Jewish culture, tradition, and religion, the goal of Lubavitch Mesivta of Chicago is more of a calling than a mission. Its curricula is rooted in the Chassidic values of Chabad outreach and engagement, whose pillars are wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. As such, the purpose of this globally recognized and highly esteemed yeshiva is clear: to be a model of academic

excellence and achievement in Talmudic study, inspiring students to give back to the Jewish Community. Graduates advance to rabbinical studies and other roles in Jewish leadership, as well as in general industry. With such a vital path, the school could not allow outgrown telecom and Internet services to become a stumbling block.

The Challenge: Keeping Multiple Disparate Networks Up, Secure, and Running

For any center of learning, let alone one that hosts students from all over the world, open, effective, and safe communications means everything—and not just in student-teacher interactions, but for the school's tech platforms, as well. And even before the pandemic had hit, just a few short years ago, the frustrated staff and faculty at Mesivta of Chicago had already reached their limit—running independent platforms across multiple locations,

and each were troublesome to operate and manage. “We found ourselves constantly scrambling to maintain and update nine different modems, nine Wi-Fi routers, nine firewalls, and nine licenses,” recounts Rabbi Avraham Hershkovich, the yeshiva's Director of Operations. “And each had multiple access points, depending on the size of the location. It was just a nightmare.”

The Solution: Enabling School-Wide Fiber-Driven Campus Connectivity

To serve an international student body living and learning on campus around the clock, the faculty and administration's commitment to mentoring and teaching is absolute. Its network and Internet services, therefore, must also be fully available, reliable, and accessible. With help from the team at Astound Business Solutions, the school went from juggling legacy cable modems and an outdated server box for voice to having its own 1 Gigabit fiber optic line. This upgrade enables point-to-point Dedicated Internet Access (DIA), Astound Wi-Fi, and Astound Hosted Voice, complete with on-premise equipment. One centralized, integrated, robust Internet and voice network now connects multiple campus buildings spread out across the neighborhood—including workstations, desktop

phones, and various wireless mobile devices.

The difference in network immediacy, capacity, and resiliency was instant and definitive, especially when distance learning unexpectedly became the de facto teaching model during the COVID-19 quarantine. "We became the pioneer for remote learning throughout the yeshiva world," recalls HersHKovich. "I remember being contacted by schools from all over—from here, France, England, and beyond—asking how we set up so fast. We were able to configure, customize, and secure 150 fully loaded tablets and ship them to students worldwide, all within three weeks of the shutdown. Thanks to Astound supporting our team, we never missed a beat."

"We became the pioneer for remote learning throughout the yeshiva world. Thanks to Astound supporting our team, we never missed a beat."

— Avraham HersHKovich, Director of Operations

The Result: "When students returned to classroom learning, it was as if they had never been apart."

Today the yeshiva's network continues to deliver. Students also have access to the network, but through heightened security filters and firewalls, and using only call/text flip phones, which shield them from the wilds of the Internet and social media. "In orthodox yeshiva circles," muses HersHKovich, "we call this 'kosher phone'. Students can connect and communicate, but we can also protect their young minds."

The ongoing customer support from Astound is particularly appreciated by the school. "When we face a rare network issue, response time is incredible," assures HersHKovich. "We don't need to escalate up a chain of command, then wait hours between callbacks. With Astound, there's a response, a solution, and a follow-up. Done." "Plus," closes HersHKovich, "through the E-Rate federal assistance program for Education, the system itself was even more affordable for us. We couldn't be more pleased."

For information about how Astound Business Solutions can help your enterprise drive greater success, [contact your local representative.](#)