

# Case Study

## University of the West Indies

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Dr. George Stewart, Senior Project Officer, Mona Campus, University of the West Indies



### The customer

The University of the West Indies (UWI) is the largest and longest standing higher education provider in the English-speaking Caribbean. In its more than 60 years of existence, it has evolved from a fledgling college on the Caribbean island of Jamaica with 33 students to a fully-fledged university with over 45,000 students across four campuses. As an icon of Caribbean integration and culture, UWI remains committed to enhancing every aspect of Caribbean development and improving the well-being of the people of the Caribbean.

### The challenge

Although UWI straddles Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago, each campus is subject to local legislature. That means that each site, of which Jamaica is the largest with 16,000 students, has its own management structure and budget. And only in Jamaica are the students subject to state-mandated tuition fees. When the economic crash of 2007 took hold, it put additional pressure on students who struggled to meet their college bills.

“While tuition is 100 percent subsidized in our neighboring campuses, here in Jamaica students must contribute 20 percent of the cost. That’s a significant burden and one which became more onerous when the global and local economy collapsed,” explains Dr. George Stewart, Senior Project Officer, University of the West Indies. “Not only were students finding it more difficult to pay their fees, our state funding was also reduced so we were facing a considerable financial shortfall.”

Dr. Stewart was tasked by the incoming Principal with devising new ways of raising money while providing opportunities for students. However, given UWI is located in a largely residential area, there were limited economic options in the vicinity.

“Opening stores or coffee shops to be staffed with students would have led to few potential jobs and low revenue. We wanted to think bigger,” adds Dr. Stewart. “I had come across an example in Toronto, where MINACS had established an outsourced business processing facility near a university campus and hired from the student body. That model seemed like a perfect fit for us.”

UWI has been working with Fujitsu for over 15 years across a range of areas, including desktop devices, servers and networking. The university turned to this trusted partner for advice on how best to build a world class contact center facility that would not only offer employment opportunities for students but also a new revenue stream for UWI.

### The customer

Country: Jamaica  
Industry: Education  
Founded: 1948  
Employees: 3,500  
Website: [www.uwi.edu](http://www.uwi.edu)



### The challenge

In the wake of the global economic crisis of 2007, UWI was faced with reduced government funding and an increase in students defaulting on their tuition fees. It wanted to develop new revenue streams while offering employment opportunities to students.

### The solution

UWI turned to long term partner Fujitsu to design and build a 700 seat contact center. Fujitsu managed multiple hardware and software vendors as well as cabling to create the new business from the ground up.

### The benefit

- Project delivered on time and within budget, despite the involvement of numerous vendors
- Provided an opportunity for employment for over a thousand students giving them an income to offset tuition fees thus ensuring that they can complete their courses
- Provided much needed revenue for the university in a time of austerity

### The solution

UWI planned a turnkey operation to build a new contact center from the ground up; one which would be staffed entirely by students. However, the first step was to find potential customers who would sign up for its services.

"We knew we had the brightest youth in the country and thus a deep pool of talent on which we could draw. The nature of studying also provides the flexibility to work in shifts and ensure 16 hours per day operations," continues Dr. Stewart. "Furthermore, Jamaica is already a well-established BPO base so it wasn't difficult to convince global brands to invest in our vision with their business."

With a global partner signed up, UWI and Fujitsu set about creating what would become the largest virtualized contact center in the Caribbean. The network infrastructure is provided by Cisco, with Avaya the chief telephony and VOIP partner. On the desktop, Wyse is the primary thin client supplier and Citrix provides the virtual environment on which the applications run.

Fujitsu itself was responsible for project managing the entire technology build and collaborating with each vendor – as well as the cabling, engineering suppliers – to ensure deadlines were met and everything worked smoothly. It also provided flexible finance arrangements to suit UWI's tight budgets.

"Fujitsu was a critical player in getting the best deals done at the best price and then taking the equipment and installing it," says Dr. Stewart. "We had ten Fujitsu engineers on site installing up to 50 seats per night – that includes putting together the physical furniture as well as wiring and configuration."

### Products and services

- Fujitsu Business Consulting
- Fujitsu Professional Services – Project Management, Implementation Services

### The benefit

As a result, UWI now has a state of the art 700 seat contact center and is poised for future expansion. One of the primary benefits was the seamlessness with which this came to fruition. Despite significant delays of incoming stock at Jamaican customs, every element came together on time and within budget.

"Everyone at Fujitsu knew exactly what to do and the whole process was transparent; given the huge amount of logistics involved in tracking flights and shipments from around the world and multiple vendors, that is particularly impressive," comments Dr. Stewart. "Now that we are up and running, we are handling around 30,000 calls per day for some fortune 500 brands."

UWI has also been impressed by the sterling after sales support provided by Fujitsu, which ensures that any issues are resolved quickly with minimal disruption to the business: "The platform is remarkably reliable because of Fujitsu's preventative maintenance approach. In two years of operation we have had only three issues, but when we do call, we know any problems will be solved efficiently," says Dr. Stewart.

### Conclusion

UWI now has a state of the art contact center that is providing new revenue streams for the organization while offering employment opportunities for over a thousand students, helping them complete their higher education. It has become a model for other institutions and a national inspiration.

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Dr. George Stewart, Senior Project Officer, Mona Campus, University of the West Indies

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2014-12-22

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