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How The Black Pear Trust leverages Proxyclick's employee check-in for a safe return to school

The Challenge

The Black Pear Trust, which consists of 3 schools, was looking for a cost-effective, efficient, and safe digital solution to manage visitors and employees. Prior to implementing a visitor management system (VMS), they were using a paper logbook to track individuals, which made it difficult to comply with fire safety regulations.

The Black Pear Trust also found that VMS developed for the education industry were too expensive, and needed a system that could integrate with their existing tools like Microsoft 365 - without additional hardware. During COVID-19, the Trust also needed a solution to help them screen employees before their arrival.

The Result

After implementing Proxyclick, The Black Pear Trust was able to save on costs as well as quickly integrate with existing tools. They could efficiently track people on the premises in case of a fire and notify anyone of an emergency.

The Trust also took advantage of Proxyclick's employee check-in features to allow all staff a seamless touchless check-in process via the Proxyclick Proovr app and front desk iPad. Teachers, staff, and parents now have peace of mind knowing that precautions are in place to secure health and safety across all 3 schools.

The Story

The Black Pear Trust, a UK organization that supports three different primary schools - Carnforth, Hollymount, and St. George CofE - holds fast to the motto "Growing Learning Communities Together." The organization employs 110 administrators and staff members; its mission is to work alongside teachers and staff within schools, provide external support through organizations and school-to-school support, and also link to local universities, all with the overarching goal of providing better opportunities for school pupils.

The Trust's inclusive philosophy reflects a recognition of the important roles that everyone in the community plays, from parents to teachers, to administrators, to students themselves, in nurturing the growth and success of local schools.

The Trust's mission is rooted in trust in and care for the community, so it comes as no surprise that when they decided to adopt a visitor management system, Proxyclick's solution met all their needs while providing the best value.

Moving on from a system that could no longer meet needs

"[W]e just had a...system where people would sign in on a piece of paper and sign back out again in a folder," explains Emma Pritchard, The Black Pear Trust's CEO. "It didn't enable us to pre-book meetings, so the office staff wouldn't necessarily know who was coming, and there wasn't a system to enable them to plan for visitors as such." More problematically, "it was not easy to see a record of who had attended school, or the school sites; we just didn't have that oversight, really."

Even prior to the pandemic, it was obvious to Miss Pritchard and her team that the Trust needed a system for knowing in real-time who was in their schools - particularly for safety reasons. (Fire safety regulations for UK schools require that the institution's administrators be aware of every individual who is on the premises at all times.) However, when they initially began looking for a visitor management system 4-5 years ago, Pritchard and her team were struck by the lack of affordable options.

There are a few companies that offer such systems in the UK, according to Miss Pritchard; however, most of these systems (besides being cost-prohibitive) rely on expensive hardware and would not necessarily integrate well with the platforms The Black Pear Trust was already using, such as Microsoft 365 and Teams. As a result of concerns about affordability and cumbersome integration, the idea of a digital VMS was dropped temporarily.

Proxyclick offers the unexpected: seamless integration at an affordable cost

However, a new possibility opened up when one of Black Pear's trustees encountered Proxyclick at an IT trade show in London and was instantly impressed. After a little bit of investigation, the rest of Black Pear's team also got on board; they felt Proxyclick offered the exact services they were looking for - without a lot of hassle.

"We chose Proxyclick because of its affordable price, and because of its integration with Microsoft Teams and other programs. The system could effectively and easily integrate with the programs we were already using."

Emma Pritchard, CEO, The Black Pear Trust

Now, one year since adoption, Black Pear Trust's entire team has come to both rely on and enjoy using Proxyclick's integrated system - and Pritchard is effusive about its functionality. "Check-in is now so simple. The staff just check in on their mobile phone, they don't have to touch the iPad kiosk," she says. "It's a touchless check-in, and that's really beneficial for us. We can easily move between sites, too. I can check into whichever site I'm at, directly from my mobile phone."

Keeping employees, staff, and students safe at school

The COVID-19 pandemic changed Black Pear Trust's needs somewhat, but if anything it has made the necessity for an integrated visitor management system even more apparent. As Pritchard notes,

"Proxyclick has been helpful in limiting and keeping track of our visitors on-site. One of the great things is that, when you do book a visitor to come in, they get an invitation email that tells them about any privacy notices in the school, or any safeguarding information. It's a really good system that enables us to do all of that."

But even more importantly, Proxyclick's touchless check-in is "ideal" for Black Pear's staff. "We don't need multiple hands touching the iPad, which helps against virus transmission. And, thankfully, we have not had an outbreak in our schools to date."

In terms of set-up, usage, and maintenance, Miss Pritchard and the staff at the Trust have also been pleased with Proxyclick's service - not only with the smoothness of integration but also with the high level and consistency of assistance that is available to customers. According to Miss Pritchard,

> "The customer process has been good. We've found in terms of the setup and support we've had, that Proxyclick has been very responsive to our requests. That's been really important for our staff."

This level of customer service - quick response times, friendly support - also helps to keep the staff engaged with the technology. This removes the typical ambivalence, or concerns about difficulties operating a product, that are common when companies transition to new technology.

A great user experience

Miss Pritchard reports that The Black Pear Trust's constituents are universally having a good experience with the product - they feel safer and enjoy the convenience provided by an integrated visitor management system.

On the administrative side, Proxyclick's VMS allows the Trust to easily keep track of everyone on a given campus, allowing them to adhere to fire safety codes (every person on the premises performs a mobile check-in daily in compliance with these regulations) and also to remain safe during the pandemic.

"Proxyclick gives admin staff clear insight around who's coming into school each day. It's enabled us to keep track of who's checked in, who's planning to come on-site; it's done everything we've wanted it to do."

But the most glowing endorsement, perhaps, comes from The Black Pear Trust's employees and stakeholders - the teachers and school staff who work with the Trust's three schools' children every day, as well as their parents - all confident that the best precautions are in place to protect their health and safety.

"Now, our employees are very excited about how they check in with Proxyclick," Miss Pritchard says. "Some even check in right from the parking garage, from their mobile device, and it just makes their day a lot easier."

Learn how Proxyclick helps companies across the world facilitate a safe return to the office.

Book a demo today.