



MGM Wireless claims further success in war against unexplained absences in Australian & US schools

12 November 2008

Latest in-house review of sector shows messageyou™ Schools is a potent weapon to improve attendance and communication to parents

A recent review of its flagship school SMS communication solution, messageyou™ Schools demonstrated spectacular results in improving attendance and parent engagement in schools.

Here are some examples from the survey: (The names and locations of the schools have been changed to protect the privacy of the school and its community).

School A

A small community school of fewer than 400 students, located in a country town. Approximately 30% of parents receive Government income assistance. The school chose MGM Wireless to assist with the implementation of Messageyou (text messaging), to provide an automated daily absence communication solution for parents and school staff.

- School leaders and staff were engaged in a planning and training process, led by an MGM consultant.

The system went live, in January 2008 and results assessed in May 2008. School staff show;

- a dramatic reduction in the following unauthorised absences;

Junior School – 76% reduction
Middle School – 81% reduction
Senior School – 63% reduction
- positive feedback from parents, with most parents sending notes or using reply SMS (35%)

The tailor-made solution enabled the school to;

- Communicate quickly with parents of bus students (about one third of the student population).
- Ensure roll marking accuracy for senior students who are involved in vocational education, including work placement external to the school.
- Support the work of an Indigenous education worker.

The solution also ensured that those families who lived in mobile phone 'black holes' were able to receive text to voice communication by landline phone.

Mr Fortunatow said: "This tailor-made solution showed the flexibility of the product when faced with circumstances not found in urban settings."

School B (The primary school solution package)

A Primary School (430 students) located in a middle to high socio – economic suburb of a capital city, sought our assistance to explore how our communication solutions could contribute to safety and duty of care. The school wanted to enhance already strong connections with the parent community and at the same time reinforce expectations of student punctuality. Student attendance was considered satisfactory.

The principal and school project team used the introduction of Messageyou to introduce significant changes to the process of entering roll data into the schools Student Information Management System (SIS). Changes were also made to the process of recording and following up on late students.

A review conducted with the assistance of MGM in April 2008 showed;

- up to 80% of parents used SMS to inform the school about absence or lateness.
- there was a 41% improvement in lateness issues
- Unexplained absences dropped by 3.7% from 6.7% to 3% (an improvement of 55%)
- Attendance across the school rose from an average of 93.2% to 96.9%

As a result of the review, further modifications were made to the process of processing late students.

School C - School District (USA)

Two schools in an East Coast USA District, introduced messageyou™ Schools and messageyou™ Watchlists part way through the second semester of the 2007/2008 School Year. The project was driven by the District Superintendent, who set high expectations of school and district staff to make a difference in student attendance. The two schools have a high percentage of Non English Speaking Parents. The District chose to start sending text to voice messages, then move to text messages, starting with parents of students in the junior secondary years (8/9)

A review conducted by an MGM Consultant in May, 2008 showed that despite only having messageyou solutions for a part of the second semester:

- A reduction in period absences is estimated at 20% for the time that messageyou was operational in one school.
- A reduction in period absences is estimated at 43% for the time that messageyou was operational in the other school.
- Both schools reported high staff and parent acceptance of the system
- Data provided by messageyou™ Watchlists enabled more timely and focused staff follow up.
- Both schools have expanded the program to include students in years 9 & 10 in the 2008/2009 school year (just starting) and are also encouraging parents to use the text communication format.

CONCLUSION

MGM Wireless remains committed to improving communications throughout school communities using the company's latest technology solutions and the ease of communications of the modern and ubiquitous mobile phone.

"MGM's powerful text messaging technology is a fast and unobtrusive method of getting vital school information into the hands of parents and guardians," Mr Fortunatow said.