



BUSINESS

Success Story



24HourAnswers.com gets schooled on the quality and value of Plantronics headsets.

24HourAnswers.com
www.24houranswers.com

Headquarters:
Rockland County, New York

Industry:
Advanced online college and high school tutoring

Number of Employees:
Six full-time employees and over 140 contract tutors

The Situation:
The built-in audio portion of the 24HourAnswers.com live-tutoring platform often echoes. Headsets eliminate the problem and are mission critical to the platform's success.

The Solution:
.Audio™ 655 DSP, Blackwire® 420 and Blackwire® 620

BACKGROUND

At 24HourAnswers.com, high school and college students receive help from tutors across a range of subjects, from simple math to advanced computer programming to religion and writing. Students can request a live remote tutoring session 24/7 using the company's state-of-the-art whiteboard technology on which participants can write and draw and share information. The whiteboard platform also enables voice so that students and tutors can verbally communicate during the session.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

CEO Lowell Parker established 24HourAnswers.com in 2008 to meet a boom in online tutoring. In 2012, the U.S. market for supplemental education was \$5 billion, representing a tenfold increase since 2001, according to Eduventures, an education-research and consulting firm.

Parker, who had been tutoring offline for many years, enlisted a team of programmers to help him create the site where students can schedule an interactive tutoring session with a subject area expert. Typical student-tutor engagements last throughout an entire semester. However, it's not uncommon for students to request a session the day of a test to help them prepare. The 24HourAnswers.com platform enables chat sessions for a more impromptu exchange if there isn't time for an interactive session. Also at the site's Homework Help Center, students can get expert guidance on anything from a simple question to an advanced assignment, such as a lab write up.

plantronics



Audio 655 DSP



Blackwire 420



Blackwire 620

"I found the Plantronics sound to be high quality and never had any problems with it."

Despite its advanced technology, the whiteboard has a sound problem with echoes. "The echo disrupts communication between the student and the tutor," Parker explained.

In his own experience using the platform, which he often did with students from his private tutoring practice, Parker found that using a headset eliminated the echo. "I went online and purchased a Plantronics corded headset," he said. "It came with a USB connector that plugs right into the computer. It had high sound quality and eliminated the echo. The headset also provided privacy, which is helpful since tutors or students might be in an open environment with other people around." During the first few years the site was live, Parker featured a note advising students to use a headset to ensure an optimal sound experience during a live session.

Over time, Parker trialed several additional Plantronics corded headsets with the live-tutoring platform, including the .Audio 655, Blackwire 420, and Blackwire 620 USB headsets. "When you use a brand for a while and like the results, you want to stay with it," he said, "I found the Plantronics sound to be high quality and never had any problems with it."

Parker was confident each of the three Plantronics headsets fit the bill. They offered noise cancellation technology assuring a quality audio experience with the 24HourAnswers.com platform. And the price range was appropriate for any student and tutor budget.

Parker eventually updated the site with a buy-Plantronics recommendation. Now when a student requests a live session,

the site directs them to a Plantronics distributor to place an order. Parker also advises his tutors to use a Plantronics headset if they don't already have an audio solution.

With the 24HourAnswers.com site well established among students, Parker is looking to market the online service to colleges and universities.

Recently 24HourAnswers.com made the short list to present its online tutoring services to Broward College in Florida. Parker said that the Plantronics headsets were essential in showcasing the whiteboard technology at its best.

"I gave my marketing manager three Plantronics headsets to take along for a live demo," he said. "There were no distracting echoes to interrupt the flow of the presentation. Headsets will be a standard part of our new business presentations."

AUDIO TECHNOLOGY IS MISSION CRITICAL TO SOLUTION

Plantronics .Audio 655, Blackwire 420, and Blackwire 620 USB headsets are ensuring that the live-tutoring offered by 24HourAnswers.com is not hampered by distracting and disruptive noise.

With Plantronics headsets, when students go online for help at 24HourAnswers.com, they can be sure that the audio communication will always make the grade.

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"Plantronics headsets enabled us to resolve the sound quality issues that detracted from our exceptional tutoring platform. Plantronics technology will continue to be critical to our offering as we move into our new growth opportunity."

– **LOWELL PARKER,**
CEO, 24HOURANSWERS.COM

