International Mining and Construction Gains a Competitive Advantage

Thiess worked with Dimension Data to upgrade to Unified Communications Manager 7.0 and Unified Presence 7.0, enabling business-to-business exchange of presence and instant messaging with partners.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
THIESS
• Mining, Construction, & Services Contractor
• Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
• 15,000 employees
CHALLENGE
• Increase speed of communications with global partners
• Enhance productivity
• Quickly establish communications in temporary field offices
SOLUTION
• Upgraded to Cisco Unified Communications Manager 7.0
• Deployed Cisco Unified Presence 7.0 to exchange presence information and instant messaging with partners
RESULTS
• Gained a competitive advantage for bidding on jobs
• Increased ease of reaching mobile coworkers
• Simplified management

Challenge

Thiess, a wholly owned subsidiary of Leighton Holdings Limited, is one of Australia's largest construction, mining, and services contractors with operations throughout Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, and India. Headquartered in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, Thiess has 15,000 employees.

To develop project bids and execute projects, Thiess employees need to collaborate across time and distance barriers, both with coworkers and partners. Proposal teams, for example, include Thiess employees, partners, financing companies, and environmental planners, who spend as long as a year developing proposals. "As the proposal deadline nears, being able to reach someone for one extra piece of information can make the difference in winning a multibillion dollar deal, which can be lost by as little as US$100,000," says Benjamin Creevey, network & telecommunications manager, Thiess.

The Thiess IT group also needs to quickly deploy communications systems in temporary field offices, which operate only for the duration of the construction project, typically one to three years. Approximately 200 such offices are operational at any time, and employees in other locations need the ability to quickly reach their mobile colleagues in any location.

Solution

Thiess adopted Cisco® Unified Communications in 2004, initially motivated by toll cost reductions and easier moves, adds, and changes. In 2004, the company engaged Dimension Data, a Cisco Certified Gold Partner, to upgrade to Cisco Unified Communications Manager 4.1 in conjunction with a network upgrade to a carrier IP meshed network. Thiess began using its Cisco network as the platform for Cisco Unified Contact Center Express to manage customer calls to the subsidiary that provides waste collection and recycling services for various municipalities. Thiess also adopted Cisco Unified MeetingPlace® for voice, video, and web collaboration within the 120-person ICT

group. "MeetingPlace is a great alternative to our high-end videoconferencing systems, which are more complicated to use and require reserving a meeting room," Creevey says.

In 2008, Thiess began a pilot with Dimension Data to upgrade to Cisco Unified Communications Manager 7.0 and Cisco Unified Presence 7.0. During the pilot, approximately 30 employees are using Cisco Unified Personal Communicator, a desktop application for PC or Mac that provides a unified interface for commonly used unified communications capabilities such as voice, instant messaging, presence, voice messaging, click to call, video, conferencing, corporate directory, and call history. With Cisco Unified Presence 7.0, Thiess employees in the pilot can view the availability of business partners using either Cisco Unified Personal Communicator or Microsoft Office Communicator, add them to their buddy list, and exchange instant messages.

The first partner with whom Thiess is sharing presence information and instant messaging is Dimension Data. "Using Cisco Unified Personal Communicator, I can see when my Dimension Data service manager is available, send an instant message, click a button to escalate the chat to a voice call, and then click another button to launch a MeetingPlace session if we need to collaborate further from the desktop," says Creevey.

"We installed Unified Communications Manager 7.0 and Unified Presence in just two days, and then spent another two weeks setting up business-to-business presence federation," says Darren Kay, enterprise architect, Dimension Data.

Results

Enhanced Collaboration with External Partners

Now Thiess employees can locate and collaborate with its Dimension Data service managers as easily as if they were Thiess employees. "With business-to-business presence and instant messaging federation, my Thiess clients can see when I'm available and immediately reach out to me," Kay says. "Typical turnaround for a service request has decreased from two days to 30 minutes."

"With business-to-business presence and instant messaging federation, my Thiess clients can see when I'm available and immediately reach out to me. Typical turnaround for a service request has decreased from two days to 30 minutes."
—Darren Kay, Enterprise Architect, Dimension Data

"If we need an answer from one of our partner's engineers while developing the proposal, we will use Cisco Unified Personal Communicator to see which engineer is available and then just send an instant message. Near a proposal deadline, the ability to communicate across company boundaries can make the difference in winning a contract."
—Benjamin Creevey, Network & Telecommunications Manager, Thiess

Dimension Data plans to set up business-to-business collaboration with other Thiess partners to facilitate proposal development. As an example, Thiess engages with many external companies for various elements in the civil design process, many of which operate abroad in different time zones "If we need an answer from one of our partner's engineers while developing the proposal, we can exchange presence information with the partner to see which engineer is available, regardless of time zones, and then just send an instant message," Creevey says. "Near a proposal deadline, the ability to communicate across company boundaries and time zones can make the difference between winning a contract by providing timely delivery of information from which to make informed decisions."

Increased Ease of Working with a Global Workforce
Cisco Unified Communications eliminates the barriers of distance and time for Thiess' global workforce. Creevey recalls the time he needed to speak with an employee in the company's Jakarta, Indonesia office. The Jakarta office is connected to the Thiess network through carrier submarine networks and satellite connections to the various islands where the project operations are located. Creevey reached the employee at his usual desk number, only later finding out that he had answered from deep within the mine pit on an Indonesia island, using a wireless laptop with Cisco IP Communicator software. "From the call quality, I would never have known that the call travelled across submarine, satellite, and wireless links," says Creevey. "I just clicked to dial, and the network found him. That adds real tangible value to our business operations and communications."

> "If I'm at the other end of the building, I can answer the call on my smartphone and then hand it off it to my IP phone when I return to my office. Conservatively, I estimate that we can save at least 10 percent on our mobile costs when we introduce Cisco Unified Mobility throughout the company."
> — Benjamin Creevey, Network & Telecommunications Manager, Thiess

Lower Costs
Thiess employees move frequently as projects are completed and new ones begin. Therefore, coworkers and customers have developed the habit of just dialing the mobile number first, resulting in high mobile phone bills. Now Thiess is trying out the built-in Cisco Unified Mobility (single-number reach) feature of Cisco Unified Communications Manager 7.0. "Any caller can just dial my office number to simultaneously ring my office number and smartphone," Creevey says. "If I'm at the other end of the building, I can answer the call on my smartphone and then hand it off it to my IP phone when I return to my office. Conservatively, I estimate that we can save at least 10 percent on our mobile costs when we introduce Cisco Unified Mobility throughout the company."

Reduced Travel
Thiess takes advantage of videoconferencing to replace certain in-person meetings, reducing travel time, costs, and lower our environmental impact. "We encourage employees to use the right video solution for their business need," Creevey says. "They can use Cisco Unified Personal Communicator with video for impromptu collaboration, Unified MeetingPlace for everyday voice and document sharing, and our high-end videoconferencing rooms for meetings with many participants."

Simplified Management

Cisco Unified Communications Manager 7.0 simplifies management of the Thiess system in several ways:

- Simplified dial plan ("plus-sign dialing"): Cisco Unified Communications Manager 7.0 automatically adds dialing prefixes, such as international country codes, based on the caller's location. If someone in Australia clicks to dial a team member in Indonesia, the system adds the international dial code and Indonesia's country code. But if someone in Indonesia clicks to dial the same person, the system knows to not add those digits. "We recommend upgrading to version 7.0 to all companies that want to click to call with Unified Communications Manager," Kay says.

- Local route groups: With Unified Communications Manager 7.0, Dimension Data no longer has to create route patterns for each new Thiess site, reducing the number of entries to maintain from from 285 to 72, and the number of translation patterns from 663 to 375. "With version 7.0, we can use standardized route patterns, calling search spaces, and route lists, saving at least one day to set up each new site," Kay says.

- Easy installation: The appliance environment enabled Dimension Data to install the Unified Communications Manager application with a single download file. Future upgrades will also require only one file, and an unattended installation option will save more time.

Excellent Caller Service

A Thiess subsidiary, Thiess Services, provides waste collection and recycling services for municipalities uses Cisco Unified Contact Center Express for customer service calls. "The intelligent call routing and on-demand reports help us to provide the excellent service needed to win and retain municipal contracts," says Creevey. For smaller municipalities that have just a few contact center agents, the Thiess ICT group uses the Cisco Unity Connection voice messaging solution because of its built-in call-routing features. Callers select a number to reach the appropriate line of business which is in turn routed to the appropriate person to handle the inquiry, and if the individual is not available, the call is placed into a common shared voicemail.

Next Steps

All Thiess employees will begin using Cisco Unified Communications System 7.0 in late 2008. To avoid business disruption, Dimension Data will perform the upgrades on different weekends for Cisco Unified Communications Manager, Cisco Unity Connection, Cisco Unified Contact Center Express, Cisco Unified MeetingPlace, and Cisco Unified Presence. "Cisco Unified Communications 7.0 is the first release that gives us the flexibility to upgrade different applications at different times instead of all at once," says Kay. When Thiess upgrades to Cisco Unity Connection 7.0 unified messaging, Dimension Data will integrate it with Microsoft Outlook so that employees can manage voicemail right from their email inboxes.

Thiess is also considering using Cisco Unified Workspace Licensing to pay a single license fee for Cisco Unified Presence, Cisco Unity Connection unified messaging, and Cisco Unified Personal Communicator. "Compared to another leading solution for voicemail and presence, Cisco Unified Workspace Licensing gives us Cisco Unified Personal Communicator for no additional cost," says Creevey.

Creevey concludes, "When I presented the upgrade to our management and explained business-to-business exchange of presence, they asked how much it would cost. I reminded them that the

ability to quickly reach out to partners to finalize a bid might help us win a multibillion-dollar contract. Then I asked, 'At what cost can we not afford to do this?'"

Technical Implementation

To set up business-to-business exchange of presence and instant messaging information, Dimension Data configured Cisco Adaptive Security Appliances (ASA) at both companies to accept presence and instant messaging traffic from the other organization. Then Dimension Data added rules to Thiess' Cisco Unified Presence and its own Microsoft Office Communications Server to specify which employees' presence information is visible to employees in the other company. The final step was publishing external records on the Domain Name Services (DNS) server. The result? "When I send an instant message to someone at Dimension Data, it finds its way to them," Creevey says. information here.

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Unified Communications go to:
http://www.cisco.com/go/unifiedcommunications.

PRODUCT LIST

Switching and Routing
- Cisco 3800 Series Integrated Services Routers
- Cisco 2800 Series Integrated Services Routers
- Cisco 3750 Multiservice Access Routers
- Cisco 3650 Multiservice Platforms
- Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series Switches

Voice and Unified Communications
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 7941G, 7961G,
- Cisco Unified Wireless IP Phones 7921G
- Cisco Unified IP Conference Station 7936, 7937G
- Cisco Unified Personal Communicator
- Cisco Unified Presence
- Cisco Unified MeetingPlace
- Cisco Unity Connection
- Cisco Unified Contact Center Express
- Cisco Unified Video Advantage

Security
- Cisco VPN Client
- Cisco VPN 3000 Series Concentrators
- Cisco Adaptive Security Appliance 5510

Wireless
- Cisco Wireless LAN Controllers 4402 Series
- Cisco Aironet 1300 Series
- Cisco Aironet 1400 Series
- Cisco Aironet 1132 AG

Digital Media
- Cisco Digital Media Manager
- Cisco Digital Media Players

Network Management
- CiscoWorks Voice Manager
- Cisco ACE Server

CISCO

Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
San Jose, CA

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems (USA) Pte. Ltd.
Singapore

Europe Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Cisco has more than 200 offices worldwide. Addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers are listed on the Cisco Website at www.cisco.com/go/offices.

Printed in USA   C78-483788-00   09/08