



With Cisco Unified Communications, Kim's Chocolates adds a visual dimension to its voice communications

Flanders' most energy-minded SME: also a visionary when it comes to ICT

COMPANY

Name of the client: Kim's Chocolates
Sector: Food
Head office: Tienen, Belgium
Employees: 80 + additional temporary employees

Case Study

BUSINESS ADVANTAGES

- ICT infrastructure tailored to new requirements (growth, environmental policy, ...)
- Room for non-verbal, intuitive aspects of communication
- Greater involvement of employees, due to more personal interactions
- Safe and solid network infrastructure for IP telephony that delivers high-quality video and sound



BUSINESS CHALLENGE

After two years of spectacular growth, in 2006 and 2007, the infrastructure of Kim's Chocolates, a Belgian luxury chocolates manufacturer, was creaking at the joints. So the management decided to move to a brand-new site amid the greenery in Tienen. When designing the building, Kim's Chocolates made a conscious decision to incorporate every high-tech and environmentally-friendly facility and amenity it could – a course of action that saw the company win the coveted title of "Most Energy-Conscious SME in Flanders" in 2008.

"Making the move to a brand-new site that we were able to design ourselves provided us with unique opportunities," says Jean-Pierre Clauws from Integrated Quality Networks. Jean-Pierre is known as the 'IT man' at Kim's Chocolates. "Together with colleagues from Cisco partner RealDolmen, we transformed the progressive vision of Kim's Chocolates into an innovative communications system based on advanced technologies, such as IP telephony and unified communications. In doing so, we were able to meet a specific requirement of Kim's Chocolates."

A factory such as Kim's Chocolates, employing over 90 people, should belong to the category of "small and medium-sized

enterprises", yet in terms of space it is very much a large-scale operation. "As a result of the safety procedures put in place, the walking distance between people is sometimes quite large," says Fons Maex, founder and CEO of Kim's Chocolates. "They know one another mainly from e-mails and phone calls but they no longer see each other very much. This meant interactions were becoming less personal. By adding a picture to spoken conversations, our aim has been to enhance the personal touch as well as to make people feel more involved. That's the kind of thing you can do with the latest technology, such as Cisco's IP telephony."

SOLUTION & USER BENEFITS

These days, all PC users at Kim's Chocolates have an IP telephone with a camera at their workstation. This visual dimension has filtered through in an entirely natural and intuitive way into the interactions between colleagues. "People now have a better idea of who they are dealing with," continues Mr Maex, "which undoubtedly contributes to greater involvement. It creates room for the non-verbal aspects of communication and this extra dimension has been greeted with enthusiasm."

In the medium term, Kim's Chocolates is aiming to extend its visual-oriented IP telephony to its external business contacts, enabling them to use the IP telephony tools that have already

"Cisco and its partners Integrated Quality Networks and RealDolmen are important in helping us to realise our growth strategy. It is vital that we can call on such dependable partners." Fons Maex, CEO Kim's Chocolates

won over the staff at Kim's Chocolates with their high-quality images and sound. Cisco's "Video Advantage" technology, which Kim's Chocolates opted for, makes this entirely possible. The company has the added benefit that everything is handled in a totally secure environment, based on firewalls, VPN equipment and disaster recovery provisions.

PARTNER PROFILE

Integrated Quality Networks is an ICT services provider with extensive expertise that it keeps up to date by being the professional partner of a number of leading technology providers. The company has been a "Cisco Select Certified Partner" for a number of years. Its SME network specialists work on a whole range of Cisco solutions on a daily basis. The Belgian manufacturer of luxury chocolate products Kim's Chocolates has been their client since 1995.