

Irish ‘triple play’ service provider increases competitive advantage and delivers product innovation to its customers



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
CUSTOMER NAME	· 3PlayPlus
LOCATION	· Dublin, Ireland
INDUSTRY	· Telecommunications
COMPANY SIZE	· 20 employees
BUSINESS CHALLENGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increase brand awareness and customer numbers · Increase competitive advantage · Help small businesses get better access to advanced networking services
NETWORK SOLUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cisco foundation technologies · Linksys home and small business solutions
BUSINESS VALUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ability to differentiate brand with the capability to offer more innovative products and services · Increases portfolio of ‘triple play’ products and services · Small business customers given access to affordable enterprise networking services · Reduces the cost of ‘triple play’ services by up to 25 percent

One of the latest players in the Irish ‘triple play’ service market – 3PlayPlus – uses Cisco foundation technologies and Linksys home and small business solutions to differentiate its services and reduce costs for customers.

Business Challenge

3PlayPlus is one of Ireland’s newest Internet service providers offering consumers and businesses one of the country’s most innovative ‘triple play’ services. The company’s core offering is the delivery of TV, broadband Internet, and telephony to home users and small businesses.

Although ‘triple play’ products and services – voice, video, and data from the same provider – have a large growth potential, there are a number of hurdles facing a new business like 3PlayPlus. The main hurdle is user inertia. Most people already have all three services in their homes, albeit from two or three different suppliers. With prices constantly falling, cost is no longer a main selling point, so 3PlayPlus has to find other ways to differentiate its products and services. In addition, the slowdown in Irish property development means that multi-customer deals with developers to supply services to whole developments or blocks of flats are harder to find.

As well as the consumer market, 3PlayPlus also targets small- and medium-sized businesses (SMBs). One of the problems facing SMBs in adopting new technologies is that most of them do not have IT

departments. For them to benefit from technology such as high-speed broadband and IP telephony, they need the products and services to be simple to use, but also have those services managed by their IT equipment provider.

For both consumer and business markets, 3PlayPlus' strategy was to differentiate its services through innovation, quality, and breadth of product offering. In achieving that differentiation, Cisco networking technologies have played a key role.

Network Solution

"Cisco has the best equipment in the market, and they have such a broad range of products and solutions," Peter Carroll, Director of 3PlayPlus, says. "We also know Cisco rigorously tests its various solutions to ensure they integrate effectively, as well as testing third-party products so the end solution to customers delivers what it promises. We also like Cisco's vision, especially the fact it brings many of the benefits of its technology to home and SOHO users."

3PlayPlus has built virtually its entire data and communications infrastructure on Cisco networking technologies. Initially, the company built a network around Dublin using a Cisco Wide Area Network (WAN) over which it carries IP traffic – voice, video, and data – to and from customers. This will be expanded to cover the whole of Ireland. Content, such as television, is transmitted via satellite to 3PlayPlus' data centre in Dublin and then pushed out across the Cisco WAN and into homes. 3PlayPlus provides Cisco mini-routers for private homes and more sophisticated ones for businesses, which convert the data into phone calls, and TV or Internet content such as Web sites, e-mails or music.

"The reliability of Cisco technology means 3PlayPlus is in a much better position to guarantee quality of service to customers more or less irrespective of physical infrastructure. So whether we are delivering our services to someone in Dublin where there is fibre optic connectivity, or to someone in a more remote part of Ireland, we are providing the same quality of service," says Carroll.

Business Results

The quality and capability of Cisco technology has enabled 3PlayPlus to differentiate its service significantly from other providers. For example, 3PlayPlus is able to offer its customers basic Internet broadband access capable of scaling to 24 megabits per second with little or no network contention. This enables the company to offer additional services to the standard ones such as video-on-demand where users can hire videos and have them delivered via the Internet, instead of going to a local video rental shop.

Another example of the innovation 3PlayPlus is able to provide to customers using Cisco technology is one that enables them to create their own TV channels. Customers can develop their own content – such as home or holiday video – and then make this available to family and friends, not just as a download but as a personalised TV channel. This content can then be selected and viewed on TV in exactly the same way as standard terrestrial or subscription channels.



“We’ve had SMB customers approach us wanting the benefits of technologies like voice over IP and before it was just too expensive to deploy for a business with a few employees. But with Cisco, we are able to provide a complete ‘office in a box’ solution that includes IP telephony for the same price or even less than a standard phone system, alongside other IP facilities such as a LAN, broadband connectivity, and unified messaging.”

Peter Carroll, Director, 3PlayPlus

One of the key differentiators of Cisco's networking technology is not just delivering high-quality and reliable core voice, video and data services, but also enabling 3PlayPlus to provide customers with more products and services. The Cisco units that 3PlayPlus supplies to business users are like complete offices in a box. In a few hours, a business can set up broadband Internet access, an IP telephony system, and a Local Area Network (LAN). Moving staff around or providing new employees with complete networking services takes a few minutes and the system can scale to support more users as the business expands. The technology also supports a whole range of additional services such as managed data storage and the simple set up of a CCTV system via a LAN on site, with images stored at 3PlayPlus' data centre.



One of the key benefits for 3PlayPlus' corporate customers is that small businesses can access

PRODUCT LIST

Routing and Switching

- Cisco 7600 Series Routers
- Cisco 7200 Series Routers
- Cisco ME 3400 Series Ethernet Access Switches
- Cisco Service Node for Linksys One
- Cisco Unified Communications 500 Voice Endpoints
- Linksys One

services previously limited to much larger organisations due to high implementation costs. In addition, a small firm with a handful of employees can start off using basic networking services and very easily scale up as staff numbers increase, and as they need additional functions.

Carroll says, "We've had SMB customers approach us wanting the benefits of technologies like voice over IP and before it was just too expensive to deploy for a business with a few employees. But with Cisco, we are able to provide a complete 'office in a box' solution that

includes IP telephony for the same price or even less than a standard phone system, alongside other IP facilities such as a LAN, broadband connectivity, and unified messaging."

With Cisco, 3PlayPlus is able to address the problem of limited, in-house IT expertise common among SMBs. The company offers 'triple play' products as a managed service through a network of resellers who already provide IT services to SMB customers. The Cisco equipment is easy to deploy and requires minimal technical expertise from users, with resellers able to handle simple installation and basic support queries.

In addition to the ability to create product and service differentiation and deliver advanced networking services to SMBs, Cisco also helps 3PlayPlus reduce costs for customers by providing a more reliable infrastructure and easy-to-use equipment. Carroll estimates 3PlayPlus is able to save its customers around 20 to 25 percent compared to the cost of sourcing TV, phone, and Internet access from separate suppliers.



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