Operational Efficiency in the Public Sector

10 Recommendations for Cutting Costs

Introduction

With deep budget cuts and increasing regulatory pressure, the public sector is now required to improve efficiency at all levels with the most urgent need focused on operational functions. Cisco® recommends that organizations develop four strategies to improve their operational efficiency. The four strategies relate to the workforce, the workplace, resources, and IT. Cisco also makes 10 specific recommendations that we believe can help public sector organizations improve operational efficiency and cut costs.

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Recommendation 1

Enable Location-Independent Working

At Cisco, we think the ability of workers to enjoy location independence is the foundation for the modern, flexible, public sector workforce. In order to realize immediate reductions in expense costs and increases in productive time, we recommend remote-access VPN or virtual-office solutions for high-priority deployment. We further recommend wireless networking for all offices to improve access to information and drive worker efficiency.

Recommendation 2

Unify Workforce Communications

Unifying workforce communications promotes new work styles that improve business processes and make is possible to provide better citizen support. To help achieve this, we recommend a two-step process:

- First, converge voice and data services over a common network infrastructure to reduce total cost of ownership (TCO).
- Second, deploy unified communications to allow workers to communicate more effectively with one another and with citizens, regardless of location.

Consider using a hosted deployment model for voice services to further increase TCO savings and to put cost-saving efficiencies into effect in the shortest time possible.

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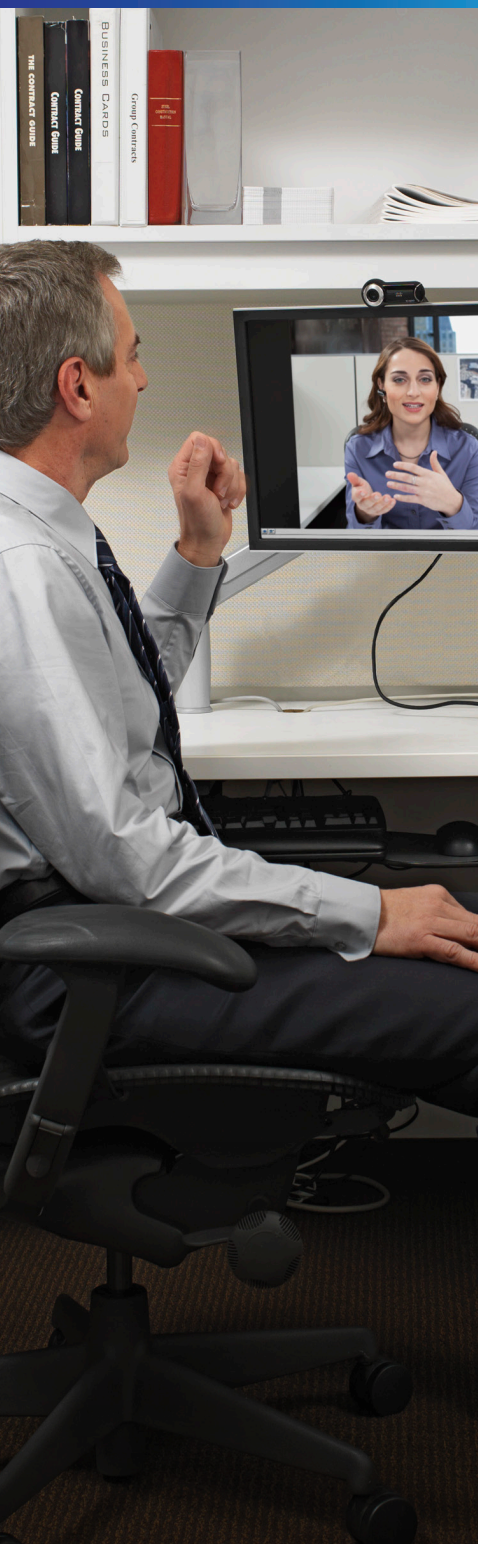

Recommendation 3

Implement Web-Based Collaboration Tools

Web collaboration should be at the heart of the modern, flexible workforce. We recommend that organizations implement collaboration tools as a cornerstone of their workforce strategy in order to benefit in the following ways:

- Virtual project and team meetings, which reduce costs and increase productivity.
- Virtual training, which avoids the substantial costs associated with ongoing training programs.
- Instant messaging, which improves the richness of communications and increases the value of meetings, thereby increasing productive time.
- Collaborative workspaces, which create secure, shared workspaces for interdepartmental or cross-agency information sharing.

Recommendation 4

Take Advantage of Video

Video has been shown to enrich business meetings. This is because, on average, words are believed to provide just 10 percent of the information in most exchanges, while other elements, including visual cues and body language, provide the remaining 90 percent. The richness of video as a vehicle of communication is one reason why video has been Cisco's single largest IT investment in recent years. Cisco has invested in:

- Desktop webcams to support video-enabled, desk-to-desk IP telephony.
- Room-based systems to provide meeting-to-meeting communications.
- Cisco TelePresence® systems to enable "face-to-face" conferencing within Cisco and with our partners.

We recommend that organizations adopt this same approach to benefit from the substantial savings available. With TelePresence alone, Cisco has saved an estimated $382 million in travel costs.

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Recommendation 5

Redesign and Relocate Office Space

A modern, flexible workforce is no longer dependent on physical buildings or on many of the traditional facilities within them. We recommend that organizations develop an office space strategy to help them adapt to these workforce changes. The strategy must address:

- The design of offices: What range of workspaces are required to suit the needs of the workforce?
- The number of offices: How much property will be required by an organization with a location-independent workforce?
- The location of offices: Where should offices be located to best suit workers and the citizens they are serving?

Recommendation 6

Implement Intelligent Building Management

Many of our customers have seen real benefits from taking what we call a Smart Connected Buildings approach to building and office management. Examples of the functions that can be supported over a robust IP network include energy monitoring and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC); security systems, alarm systems, and access control; and digital signage.

In a Smart Connected Building, all building management information is network-based so that it is accessible in a location-independent manner to staff. Office operations, therefore, no longer need to be run from a fixed physical location. You can have greater flexibility and more efficient operational control.

We recommend that organizations look again at how they manage their building space and consider the benefits of using the Smart Connected Buildings approach.

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Recommendation 7

Introduce Power Management

Managing the power used by electronic devices connected to an organization's network can translate into big cost savings. Cisco EnergyWise takes advantage of the reach and range of a modern network to control and manage the power used by network-attached devices. EnergyWise is a standard software feature of many Cisco LAN switches and network management products so it can be enabled quickly with very low deployment costs. For timely cost savings, we recommend that Cisco EnergyWise be incorporated into an organization's resources strategy.

Recommendation 8

Consolidate and Virtualize Data Centers

Cisco has a well-defined strategy to help customers consolidate and virtualize enterprise data centers as they make the transition to cloud-based computing. We call this strategy Cisco Data Center 3.0. An essential feature of Data Center 3.0 is unified computing. As its name suggests, Cisco Unified Computing breaks down existing networking, compute, and storage components within the data center. This provides more efficient shared services support and creates the ideal environment for highly efficient cloud services. Virtualization and consolidation within the data center have substantially reduced capital and operational costs for many organizations. We recommend that virtualization and consolidation be placed at the heart of an organization's IT strategy.

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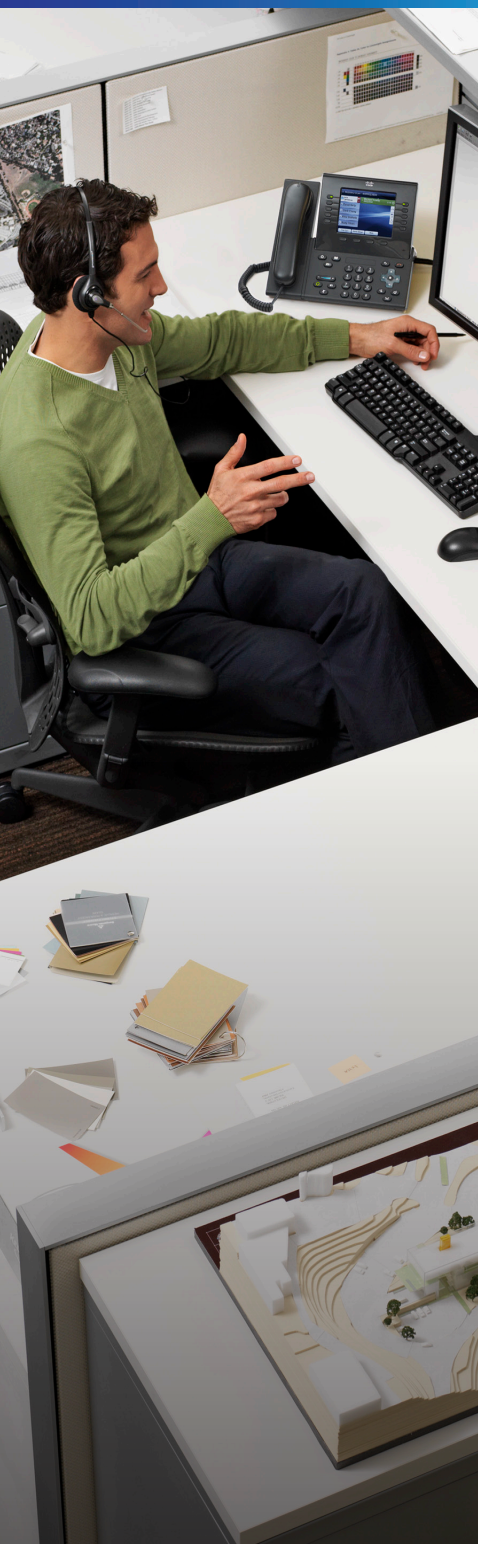

Recommendation 9

Build and Manage the Lifecycle of the Network Foundation

Did you know that in a typical legacy network, 80 percent of IT costs have to do with maintaining the network, and just 20 percent with product acquisition? As a network ages, inefficiencies accumulate and can present themselves in different ways, often in the cost of operations and the risk of downtime.

We recommend a structured review and "spring cleaning" of existing network resources. This will show the true operational costs and make it possible to remove duplicate technologies, reduce complexity, and replace out-of-date, inefficient equipment.

Recommendation 10

Develop a Virtual Desktop Environment

We recommend that public sector organizations carry out a "desktop review" by recording the costs of desktop hardware, software licenses, software updates, service management, and user help desk support. This review data can then be compared with cost projections for the adoption of virtual desktop technology. The comparison will highlight the cost benefits of virtual desktops, which include:

- Longer device lifecycles.
- Fewer software licenses and more control over software licensing.
- Easier updating of applications.
- Fewer help desk calls.

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Conclusion

We have already helped a number of public sector organizations improve operational efficiency by acting on these recommendations.

Which recommendations are right for your organization?

Please contact your Cisco representative to learn more about the products and services mentioned in this brochure and see how we can help your agency achieve their most important missions.

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