

IT Rental Company Empowers Salesforce with Collaboration



Executive Summary

- **Customer Name:** Hamilton Rentals
- **Industry:** IT Rental Services
- **Location:** Bracknell, UK
- **Number of Employees:** 75

Challenge

- Enhance collaboration for sales team across multiple sites
- Provide reliable IP communications to employees
- Maintain competitive advantage by using latest technology solutions

Solution

- Deployed enterprise-class IP telephony with easy-to-use, consolidated platform
- Gave salespeople integrated voice and video tools for high-quality, consistent collaboration experience

Results

- Enabled greater staff productivity
- Introduced opportunities to improve customer service and loyalty
- Reduced communications costs by 20 percent

Hamilton Rentals deploys Cisco communication and collaboration solutions to increase competitive edge.

Challenge

Hamilton Rentals is the United Kingdom's leading provider of short-term IT, audio-visual, and events rental services. Combining first-class engineering with an international logistics service, Hamilton Rentals offers laptops, tablet PCs, desktops, plasma/LED screens, projectors, workstations, enterprise servers, and storage solutions for periods of one day up to two years.

Following a management buyout, Hamilton Rentals found it necessary to separate its IT and communications infrastructure from the parent company, a situation that presented both challenges and opportunities for IT Manager Russell Bauckham. "We needed an IP-based phone solution that would be affordable and that we wouldn't outgrow," he says. "We also needed to connect employees working from headquarters, our two branch offices, home offices, and customer sites."

Hamilton Rentals wanted the ability to build on its unified communications infrastructure by adding integrated collaboration tools to empower its increasingly mobile sales force. Employees often travel throughout Europe and need to be productive from a variety of locations, and Bauckham wanted to give them better phone coverage and more flexibility in their communications. "We wanted to give our salesforce softphone and video capabilities on their laptops to allow them to be fully productive from any location," he says.

Hamilton approached Unifi Communications, a Cisco partner, to design a solution that would enable the company to adopt new collaboration strategies, including telepresence, extension mobility, and instant messaging (IM).

“The Cisco Business Edition 6000 gives us the flexibility to grow incrementally as our requirements dictate, and the ability to project professionalism to our customers. That’s important to a medium-sized business.”

– **Russell Bauckham**
IT Manager
Hamilton Rentals

“Being an IT rental company, it’s important for us to use and be comfortable with the latest technology tools,” says Bauckham. “It’s important to give our customers the confidence that we’re staying current.”

Solution

Purpose-Built Foundation for Collaboration

At Hamilton Rentals’ head office in Bracknell, Unifi Communications deployed Cisco® Business Edition 6000 to provide foundational unified communication and advanced collaboration services through Cisco Unified Communications Manager, Cisco TelePresence® technology, and Cisco Unified IP Phones. The Business Edition 6000 is consolidated into a single, virtual platform with redundancy for all core applications. The on-premises solution is simple to manage, reducing operations complexity and cost while allowing Hamilton to support up to 1000 users on any device, from any location, at any time. Services can be added with a simple license upgrade on the live system, with no downtime.

“We view Cisco as the market leader, with features and functionality that are second to none,” says Bauckham. “The Cisco Business Edition 6000 gives us the flexibility to grow incrementally as our requirements dictate, and the ability to project professionalism to our customers. That’s important to a medium-sized business.”

With assistance from Unifi Communications, Hamilton Rentals deployed Cisco Jabber® to members of its sales team. Jabber users can access instant messaging, softphone/voice, video, voice messaging, desktop sharing, and conferencing. And the user experience is the same whether using their laptops or other corporate-approved devices. With Microsoft Office integration, Jabber delivers a collaborative experience that boosts productivity.

Cisco Unity® Connection provides anytime, anywhere access to voicemail, including speech activation, which enables users to access their messages using voice commands while traveling. Further mobility options are provided by Cisco Extension Mobility, which allows users to hot-desk by temporarily logging into any Cisco Unified IP Phone and make and receive calls from their extension as well as access their personal configuration such as line appearance, services, and speed dials. To complete the picture, single-number reach allows salespeople to publish one number, which when called, will ring multiple devices, making salespeople available to customers wherever they are and on whichever device they happen to be using.

Empowering Employees to Engage

Salespeople can now easily determine if and how their colleagues are available, and collaborate instantly. Users simply click to begin an IM session, initiate a smartphone call, or easily start a videoconferencing call. Senior staff use Cisco video phones along with Jabber at their home offices. “Users are beginning to realize the enhanced potential for collaboration when they’re looking at each other instead of just talking,” says Bauckham.

Cisco 2900 Series Integrated Services Routers have been provisioned at all three sites to act as voice gateways as well as WAN routers in the two branch offices. To provide enhanced resilience, Unifi utilized the Survivable Remote Site Telephony (SRST) capability in the Cisco 2900 Series Routers. If a branch office loses connectivity to the central Cisco Business Edition Server, all phones in that branch will reregister to the local voice gateway to provide continuous telephony features until connectivity is re-established.

Unifi provides front-end support, backed by Cisco SMARTnet® Service. “I was very impressed with Unifi Communications,” says Bauckham. “They made us feel very confident in what we were doing, and with the support of Cisco SMARTnet Service, everything was configured during the pre-staging process, minimizing on-site deployment time and business impact.”

Results

Together, the Cisco tools are reducing costs and helping Hamilton maintain its competitive advantage. Employees can collaborate across sites and be more productive, responding to customer needs faster. “Our salespeople are fully connected with the Cisco Business Edition 6000, with all the tools they need right there at their fingertips,” says Bauckham.

The Cisco solution has been reliable, with no downtime during business hours. “If we’re not answering the phone, we’re not taking orders,” says Bauckham. “The Cisco Business Edition 6000 has been very stable, and our people believe in it.”

The Meet-me conferencing feature of Cisco Unified Communications Manager allows Hamilton to initiate a conference session that colleagues and partners or customers can dial in to. This feature is saving Hamilton £5,000 every year on external call conferencing facilities. Site-to-site connectivity to the head office terminates on a Cisco ASA 5500 Adaptive Security Appliance, allowing internal calls to be made for free over the Hamilton WAN. “We’ve reduced call costs by around 20 percent with the Cisco Business Edition 6000,” Bauckham says. “The ability to track sales calls and IM activity from a central location is also very useful to the business; we can use that data to assess and adjust our sales efforts.”

Hamilton plans to take advantage of new possibilities to enhance customer service and loyalty, such as integrating the phone system with Hamilton’s customer relationship management software to automatically pull up the right customer record when a representative answers the phone. “Anything we can do to save time and improve service ultimately helps our bottom line,” says Bauckham.

Next Steps

Hamilton is investigating the use of Cisco Jabber on mobile devices and anticipating growing use of video as users become accustomed to a more complete communication experience. In the near future, Hamilton plans to deploy Cisco WebEx® Meeting Center for sharing high-definition video, integrated audio, and other real-time content. Salespeople will be able to launch WebEx directly from Jabber to escalate a conversation into a web conference that combines file and presentation sharing with voice and video.

“Keeping up with collaboration technology is helping us maintain our competitive edge,” says Bauckham. “The ability to do videoconferencing with WebEx and operate face-to-face with customers will be very beneficial to our business, and builds on the communications platform we have already put in place.”



Product List

Unified Communications

- Cisco Business Edition 6000
- Cisco Unified IP Phone 8900 Series
- Cisco Unity Connection
- Cisco Unified Survivable Remote Site Telephony
- Cisco Unified Presence

Collaboration Applications

- Cisco Jabber

Routing and Switching

- Cisco 2900 Series Integrated Services Routers

Security

- Cisco ASA 5500 Series Adaptive Security Appliance

Services

- Cisco SMARTnet
- Software Subscription (UCSS)

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Collaboration Solutions, please visit:
www.cisco.com/go/collaboration.



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