Computex Technology Solutions Deploys Cisco Video

Cisco Partner Perspective

Introduction

Long-time Cisco® partner, Computex Technology Solutions has good exposure to several industries including oil and gas, and has been well-connected to small, medium, large, and enterprise-level businesses through its involvement in the Partner Summit and the Partner Technology Advisory Board (PTAB). Involvement with the Cisco business units and Advisory Board inspired Computex to pursue video, an essential component that has always been top-of-mind as an emerging technology at various events.

Prior to adopting a consolidated and holistic collaboration solution, Computex had a variety of collaboration efforts. However, the company was not using many of the video features regularly or effectively. "We leveraged features of WebEx including document sharing, editing, and conference call capabilities," says Faisal Bhutto, Computex vice president, Corporate Strategy, "but were not regularly engaging through video. We needed a holistic solution that would allow for simple user adoption and would integrate with our current environment."

Before Computex deployed Cisco Hosted Unified Communication and Collaboration tools, communication and collaboration were based on a traditional office environment model. Scheduling meetings was time consuming and inefficient, with employees spending more time traveling to the Computex offices in Austin, Texas than the total duration of the meeting attended. Employees were losing a day of productivity at the office, leading to strict time constraints and rigid agendas during scheduled meetings. Off-agenda topics were left in the parking lot, regardless of potential business value.

For Computex, the turning point was the Cisco acquisition of Tandberg. Tandberg desktop units allow its employees to engage externally (outside the network) easily and the video quality adds great value to meetings. Prior to the fleet upgrade, Computex used a conventional small business private branch exchange (PBX) system.

"Video is the new, modern way of doing business and communicating," says Bhutto. "It's more intimate than a basic phone call and timelier than waiting to discuss something 'in person.' It is becoming expected, almost second nature."

Solution

Computex is one of first companies in the southern Texas area to offer a hosted solution and encourages video adoption throughout its business interactions. A hosted Cisco TelePresence® system, built on Cisco infrastructure, provides the ability for small to medium-sized businesses such as Computex to modernize their collaborative efforts with a professional and secure way of communicating. Plug-and-play configurations mean its customers can run video easily and efficiently.

Because Computex hosts the service at its data center, the bandwidth needed for video depends on what its customers use. Computex plans capacity to ensure sufficient data center bandwidth. To deliver high-quality video, Computex deployed and enabled the following Cisco solutions and services:

- Cisco Unified Communication video accessibility
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager (CallManager)10.5, updated to include native support of all Cisco TelePresence end-points
- Cisco TelePresence Video Communication Server (VCS) Control and VCS Expressway, enabling B2B and B2C enhancement
- Cisco Collaboration Edge, version 10 add-in
- Cisco TelePresence Multi Control Unit (MCU) MSE Series blade for a multimedia conferencing bridge

- Cisco Jabber® on workstations, tablets, and phone (now, fully integrated to connect Cisco and Computex customers when applicable)
- Integrated Cisco WebEx® with TelePresence
- End-to-end Cisco Nexus® 5000 and 2000 Series, and Cisco Catalyst® 6509, 4507, and 3570x switches, and Cisco Integrated Services Routers (ISR) 2821, 3845, and 2921 with properly configured quality of service
- Cisco 8900 Series, 9900 Series, and DX600 Series IP Phones
- Cisco TelePresence System EX Series

Deployment

Integrating video into the Computex business environment followed a top-down deployment approach. In 2009, Computex began preparing for a better collaborative environment, ensuring that it had the correct back-end infrastructure in place to deploy the next-generation solutions and the services that it needs today.

Early infrastructure planning enabled Computex to deploy Cisco Desktop Video Endpoints, B2B and B2C Communications, WebEx-enabled TelePresence, and VCS Expressway company-wide, in six weeks, at six offices across the United States, spending US$500,000 in infrastructure improvements and equipment. Computex dismantled legacy equipment and upgraded the full fleet of desktop phones to Cisco 8900 Series and 9900 Series IP Phones. Planned outages with allocated mission-critical resources to the Austin co-location ensured that customers were not affected during the cutover period.

Driving a new business culture required an adoption plan led by senior management. Computex implemented internal policies that made it mandatory for all employees to use video during calls and meetings where applicable. Computex highly recommends implementing a policy requiring video to both encourage user adoption and to transform the business culture. The addition of video in everyday practice complements the company's business interactions, from how sales teams talk to customers to how engineers speak to IT managers and more importantly, how its Network Operations Center (NOC) supports its customers. Video is a simple, convenient component for the end-user.

Computex customers can use its hosted video collaboration system and enjoy full back-end support; the only cost incurred is the purchase of endpoints.

Being able to interact with customers through Cisco TelePresence and WebEx Video is yielding several benefits for Computex:

- Stronger trust between clients and Computex
- Higher employee and customer retention rates
- Increased customer loyalty
- Increased comfort level (customers feeling more comfortable sharing/accepting proposals)

Management

Computex employs highly qualified engineers, including experts with CCIE certification who manage and maintain the video solution. Prior to launch, the NOC was certified in video capabilities, giving Computex the ability to continue using an internal software platform and an automated ticketing and monitoring system, as well as current management processes to handle deployment and service. Some of the managing processes involve onboarding, deployment timeframe, support, training sessions, and post-deployment support (24-hour a day NOC) for customers. Customer service representatives in the NOC also manage incoming calls and tickets. End-users have a smooth, cohesive experience.

The internal software platform within the NOC is measured on service level agreements (SLAs). It has tiered levels with dashboards and also proactively alerts for systems that are not working normally. All these items are reviewed internally on a regular basis. Computex customers can make service requests by phone or through an online platform.

Service and Support

As with many new deployments, support cases were initially high at the beginning due to lack of user experience. Many questions arose about how to use all the new features. Some cases included delayed video from voice, inablity to use from a remote location, or some users were unable to see video. The NOC troubleshot each case successfully. Computex expected this spike in cases and was prepared to manage users' needs. Today, the support load for video services is minimal.

Computex qualified teams, including staff in the NOC and onsite CCIEs, to support all escalations and other issues. As a Cisco Gold Partner, Computex also leverages the Cisco Technical Assistance Center (TAC), when necessary, for resolving major issues.

Computex's 24-hour a day U.S.-based NOC is regularly certified and continually updated through internal communication and training sessions. As the first point of contact, the NOC staff plays a key role in supporting customers. When issues are escalated, the majority are resolved within the call and on the first attempt.

Computex used a variety of change management tools to help its users adapt to the Cisco video solution. Some of these tools included a weekly e-newsletter with trianing tips titled "NOC Talk with Jennifer" (Figure 1), WebEx training sessions, customized documents with Frequently Asked Questions, and onsite end-user training.

Figure 1.   NOC Talk with Jennifer, Computex Training e-Newsletter

As a member of the Cisco PTAB, Computex provides feedback to Cisco regarding its products and solutions. In addition, a Cisco sales team meets with Computex clients on a regular basis to obtain in-person feedback. Computex also communicates weekly with its Cisco representative to share feedback about its experience with Cisco technology.

Internally, Computex has weekly sales meetings and NOC reviews, as well as monthly companywide meetings. Computex also gathers feedback from Level 1 and 2 engineers, sales teams, CCIEs, and senior management to take back to its Cisco contacts.

The addition of video to Computex's consolidated, holistic collaboration solution has enabled Computex to build trust with not only remote colleagues but with its customers as well. "Our customers are very forward-thinking, and they understand the impact of having video in their business environments," says Bhutto. "It is important that we continue to keep them up to date on the best solutions in this space."

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For More Information

To read additional Computex Technology Solutions information, visit http://www.computex-inc.com.

To read additional Cisco IT case studies on a variety of business solutions, visit Cisco on Cisco: Inside Cisco IT www.cisco.com/go/ciscoit.

Cisco Unified Communication Solutions

http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/products/unified-communications/index.html

Note

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