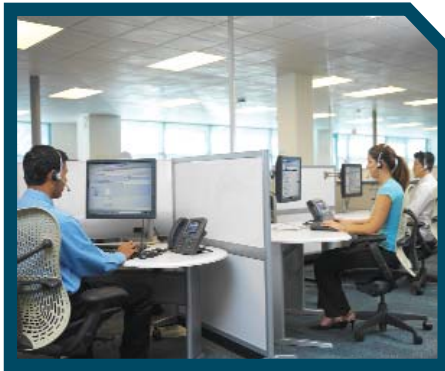


WORLD'S LARGEST ACCOUNTANCY ASSOCIATION CUTS COSTS AND IMPROVES MEMBERSHIP CONTACT WITH CISCO IP COMMUNICATIONS

The world's largest accountancy association has installed a Cisco IP network and IP communications solution that is enabling it to manage huge fluctuations in call centre traffic and cut telephony costs by 10 percent every year.

Telephony critical to 350,000 ACCA members and students

The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) is the largest accountancy association in the world. It has over 105,000 members and 245,000 students in 160 countries, served by 650 staff. ACCA provides education, training and professional qualifications for accountants and communications provide a vital link between the ACCA and its members. Members and students contact the ACCA by phone, fax, letter and email for a wide range of information, advice and material on their membership and the accountancy profession in general. Tracking this volume of activity creates several million electronic event records potentially with associated scanned images.



ACCA's main administration, data centre and global call centre is in Glasgow, Scotland, where almost half of the ACCA's UK employees are located. This had been two separate offices, but the ACCA needed more space so it moved both offices into a single, but larger building.

Prior to the move, ACCA's data and voice communications infrastructure had been based upon several different vendor technologies - some relatively recent, but others outdated. The business impact of a multi-vendor environment was raising maintenance costs, increasing complexity and effort to provide support, and making it difficult to view performance and capacity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CUSTOMER NAME

- The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)

INDUSTRY

- Professional Services

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Improve communications to 350,000 members and students world wide
- Reduce cost and complexity of managing multiple platforms and suppliers
- Centralise network management
- Provide a more information about voice and data traffic to improve reporting and management

NETWORK SOLUTION

- Cisco integrated IP network, telephony and call centre solution

BUSINESS VALUE

- Telephony costs cut by 10% every year
- Effectively able to manage huge call volume fluctuations
- Cuts out the need to manage multiple platforms and supplier contracts
- Network management centralised and made simpler and easier
- Ensures consistent and high service levels to international offices
- Provides a component based platform to enable future voice and data technology initiatives

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of the whole infrastructure. The re-location gave ACCA the opportunity to upgrade its data and communications components. ACCA decided to use just one supplier for the entire infrastructure - Cisco Systems.

Cisco cuts telephony costs by 10% a year

"ACCA is a professional membership organisation but we operate in a competitive, commercial and international market. With Cisco we have a voice and data infrastructure that would be the envy of many organisations much larger than ACCA," says Devine. "We can control costs while still maintaining a high level of service and that's largely down to having a single source solution. We now know, in real-time, what is going on across the network - whether it is on a single-site, a remote office network, or traffic going through the call centre."

Devine estimates that on an annual spend of £700,000, Cisco technology is saving ACCA ten percent of data communications costs. Support and maintenance costs less because ACCA no longer needs to contact several different suppliers to identify and then solve problems. Neither does ACCA have to manage several different support contracts. Greater visibility of the network also means that ACCA can anticipate problems, such as periods of peak network use, and manage them more effectively. Part of the cost reduction results from lower inter-office call costs because most of these calls now go over the Cisco IP network.

The deployment of Cisco's IPCC Express solution has had major impact on communications with members. ACCA has dramatic fluctuations in the number of calls it receives into its call centre, particularly around deadlines, such as registering for an exam. Cisco IPCC Express distributes calls efficiently to ACCA's 50-strong call centre staff and when demand increases, calls overflow to second tier agents. This ensures that calls are not left holding for long periods or diverted to voice mail, thereby allowing ACCA to provide higher levels of customer service.

Given previous positive experience of Cisco, rather than ask why choose Cisco, I would ask why not? Cisco has created a global brand, with an excellent set of products, services and support."

Mark Divine
IT Director
ACCA

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The Cisco IP communications solution also means that small one or two person service teams can manage incoming calls much more efficiently by routing calls to the call centre or another office when they are out of the office or on another call. Devine says, "The flexibility of the Cisco IPT technology has made a huge difference to the way we manage and utilise our communications. Services are no longer restricted to the kit installed at each site - it is the capability of the whole, integrated network that is making a difference."

ACCA is planning to improve communications over the Cisco IPC infrastructure further by deploying Cisco MeetingPlace - a fully integrated voice and web conferencing solution - and video conferencing.

Cisco technology is also playing a key role as ACCA increases and expands its international reach. "It is important that members can contact any ACCA office in the world and get the same level of service as they would from the UK," says Devine. "We are in the process of devolving our services to local offices and the only way we can control access and level of service and protect the ACCA brand is through integrated communications technology. With Cisco we now have the network infrastructure to do that."



The flexibility of the Cisco IPT technology has made a huge difference to the way we manage and utilise our communications.



Corporate Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-4000
800 553-NETS (6387)
Fax: 408 526-4100

European Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV
Haarlerbergpark
Haarlerbergweg 13-19
1101 CH Amsterdam
The Netherlands
www-europe.cisco.com
Tel: 31 0 20 357 1000
Fax: 31 0 20 357 1100

Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-7660
Fax: 408 527-0883

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
Capital Tower
168 Robinson Road
#22-01 to #29-01
Singapore 068912
www.cisco.com
Tel: +65 6317 7777
Fax: +65 6317 7799

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