

Cork County Council transforms customer service while cutting communication costs by 25 percent



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
CUSTOMER NAME	· Cork County Council
LOCATION	· Cork, Ireland
INDUSTRY	· Local Government
COMPANY SIZE	· 2,700 employees
BUSINESS CHALLENGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ageing and inefficient communication systems hindered customer service · The Council was unable to see accurately why poor communication was affecting customer service · Cost of inter-office telephony was expensive – around 25 percent of all communication costs
NETWORK SOLUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cisco Unified Communications system · Cisco Wireless Wide Area Network (WAN)
BUSINESS VALUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Significantly increases customer service with abandoned call rates at just 2-4 percent, and first call resolution up to 92 percent for some services · Customers get a faster service with average call answer times under nine seconds, and average call times under three minutes · Delivers a return on investment within two years · Helps to increase staff efficiency and information sharing · Helps to reduce the Council's carbon footprint

A Cisco Unified Communications system enables Cork County Council to dramatically improve customer service through improvements in customer call handling, as well as deliver significant call charge and management cost savings.

Customer Profile

Cork County Council in southern Ireland serves over 350,000 people, with Cork County being the largest county in Ireland. The Council oversees three separate regions and has some 128 office locations spread across a wide geographical area. More than 70 percent of communication with the Council takes place by phone, representing more than 600,000 calls a year, or 300 every hour.

Business Challenge

- Ageing and inefficient communication systems hindered the ability to deliver good customer service because information was difficult to share.
- Council was unable to get an accurate view of why poor communication was affecting customer service.
- Cost of inter-office telephony was expensive – around 25 percent of all communication costs.
- Different and poor telephone systems made it difficult to transfer calls between offices.
- Data network performance and capacity unable to support modern application needs.

Network Solution

- A Cisco Unified Communications system comprising:
 - Wireless Cisco Wide Area Network (WAN) between offices;
 - Cisco Local Area Networks (LANs) within offices;
 - 1,700 Cisco Unified IP handsets;
 - Unified messaging platform: Cisco Unity.
- James Fogarty, Director of IS at Cork County Council, says, "Cisco won this deal on value for money, quality of equipment, and service. Cisco was there every step of the way and it excels at the service and support it and its business partners deliver. The Cisco technology itself has been extremely reliable and has proven itself again and again with very few difficulties."



The solution at Cork County Council was implemented through a partnership with BT, a Cisco Gold Certified Partner.

Business Results

- "The Cisco converged network is a vital tool in helping the Council improve customer service. The analogy is a railroad, with Cisco and the Cisco Unified Communications system the rails on which our customer service initiatives run. We're very happy that we invested in this world-class infrastructure because it helps empower Council staff to improve customer service," says Fogarty.
- Significantly improves customer service:
 - Cisco helps to reduce the number of abandoned calls to between two and four percent.
 - Cisco is part of the Council's service improvement effort to raise first call resolution to 87 percent, and up to 92 percent for motor tax enquiries.
 - Customers get a faster service with average call answer times under nine seconds, and average call times under three minutes.
 - The Council can measure the impact of telephony traffic accurately and therefore deliver more effective solutions.
- Motor Tax department improvements:
 - Large number of annual calls (around 110,000) swamped department staff who were unable to serve customers properly, despite their hard work. Now the department has a 1.4 percent abandonment rate and a 92 percent first time fix rate.
 - Previously, information about problems was anecdotal. The Cisco solution enables a detailed view of peak call times, and is used to divert enquiries to the call centre where they are answered or forwarded to the Motor Tax department. Referrals to back office account for only 8 percent of calls received.
 - Customers get a much faster and more reactive service with calls answered within two to three rings, as well as better and faster access to motor tax experts.

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James Fogarty, Director of IS, Cork County Council

- Delivers better value for money:
 - Cisco has enabled Cork County Council to reduce the cost of inter-office calls by 25 percent.
 - Cost savings will deliver a return on investment for the Cisco solution within two years.
- PRODUCT LIST**

Routing and Switching

 - Cisco Catalyst 6500 and Edge Switching
 - Wireless products

Voice and IP Communications

 - Cisco Unified Communications Manager (CallManager)
 - Cisco Unified IP Phones 7900 Series
 - Cisco Unity
- “Reducing data and telephone downtime, and reducing the burden and cost of maintenance of disparate systems, are a large part of the payback for these systems. Since implementing the Cisco solution, simplification and maintenance cost reduction has paid dividends for the Council. The ability to look at call transfers, effectively have free internal calls, and incorporate the whole organisation in one system has the potential for large cost savings and improved customer service in the future,” says Fogarty.
- Helps to enhance staff efficiency and information sharing:
 - Increase in network performance makes sharing information between different offices easier and faster.
 - Improved network performance means staff can access more information quickly, as well as resolve customer enquiries faster.
 - The Cisco solution helps the Council deploy centrally-hosted Web applications, improving access to information for customers and for staff to serve customers better. Examples include access to: planning, with GIS-enabled maps; the Property Interest Register; and a data warehouse application for budgeting and finance.
 - Industry recognition:
 - The project was part of an assessment by it@cork (a not-for-profit organisation representing the interests of ICT professionals in Cork) for the 2008 Leaders Award, with the Council winning top honours in the category for best IT Department.
 - The award recognised the business benefits derived from IT project implementation, as well as the Council’s standing as a leader in the provision of ICT solutions within local government in Ireland.
 - Helps to reduce the Council’s carbon footprint:
 - Staff use their Cisco handsets to switch lights on and off and dim them, improving energy efficiency.
 - Lights in the same office or building can be controlled from any handset, making it convenient and easy for staff to manage.



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