

New system helps PricewaterhouseCoopers Ireland deliver better productivity, improved customer service and business continuity



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CUSTOMER NAME · PricewaterhouseCoopers
LOCATION · Dublin, Ireland
INDUSTRY · Professional Business Services
COMPANY SIZE · 2,100 people
BUSINESS CHALLENGE · Consolidating four offices into a single head office location · 90 percent of people are mobile and work both on- and off-site · Implement a secure, robust, and scalable platform to support the business and facilitate future developments
NETWORK SOLUTION · Cisco Unified Communications · Cisco Wireless
BUSINESS VALUE · Delivers a reliable and robust data and voice communications infrastructure · Ensures business continuity and more reliable business applications · Supported the single largest office relocation in Ireland · 2,000 people moved over a bank holiday weekend · Provides a platform for deploying innovative and business-focused services and applications · Expected to deliver significant communication cost savings

Ireland's largest professional services firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers, uses a Cisco Unified Communications system to empower a mobile workforce which can deliver business results regardless of physical location.

Business Challenge

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) is the largest professional services organisation in the world, providing top class integrated assurance, tax, and advisory solutions across all industries and markets. Through its Connected Thinking approach and working with a network of over 146,000 people in 150 countries, PwC provides clients with innovative and practical advice. It has won recognition for the level of service it provides to customers, and its Irish business, PwC Ireland, is no exception. In 2007 PwC Ireland won first place in the Annual Finance Accountancy Survey, and in 2004, 2005 and 2006 it won the Accountancy Ireland Thought Leadership award.

PwC won an Occupier of the Year award at the 2007 Irish Property Awards event, and won The Best Company to Work For in Ireland in 2008.

In Ireland the firm employs over 2,100 people across seven offices in Cork, Dublin, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Waterford, and Wexford. PwC has its headquarters at a new, state-of-the-art building at Spencer Dock in Dublin.

PwC has a high proportion of people who move between client sites and PwC offices and, increasingly, they need more sophisticated systems and applications to support day-to-day business operations.

It was PwC's move to its new headquarters that prompted the organisation to review and evaluate the effectiveness of its existing IT infrastructure. The move to Spencer Dock consolidated four locations in Dublin into a single office with over 2,000 people. The move to a single location brought most of PwC's people under one roof.



However, the move created fresh challenges, of which the most important was minimising the disruption to people and day-to-day operations. Around the world, PwC has a strategic policy to buy Cisco technology for its data communications infrastructure, so PwC Ireland was already using Cisco for its data network. When the organisation relocated, it decided to extend its Cisco infrastructure to include a new IP telephony system – a decision that would help smooth the transition.

Elaine McMillan, Systems Engineering Manager at PwC Ireland, says, "In PwC worldwide, Cisco is, for very good reasons, the standard for data communications. Cisco's is a very robust, stable, and scaleable technology. Whilst we did look at other technologies when we were reviewing our telephony solution, our decision to go with Cisco was a simple one because of the quality and reputation of the Cisco technology."

Network Solution

Working with partner Lan Communications, a Cisco Gold Certified Partner, PwC Ireland has deployed a Cisco Unified Communications system at its new headquarters in Dublin and is in the process of rolling out the solution across the whole of Ireland. The Cisco Unified Communications system includes a Cisco Wide Area Network (WAN) connecting the organisation's seven offices in Ireland where there are Cisco Local Area Networks (LANs). In the new Dublin office the Cisco LAN delivers gigabit Ethernet to every desktop. Here, the Cisco infrastructure further supports around 2,000 Cisco Unified IP phones, to which a further 200 will be added when the telephony is extended to regional offices. PwC also plans to use a Cisco Unified Contact Centre in Dublin for its IT help desk service.

The Spencer Dock facility uses a Cisco wireless network to provide full wireless connectivity throughout the site. It enables PwC to provide visitors with secure Internet access that is segregated from PwC's internal network.

Business Results

"Our commitment to the business is to provide a secure and resilient data communications infrastructure that keeps the business going and doesn't break down – that's why we use Cisco. PwC is a knowledge-based business and the information we hold is key to the business. If our infrastructure or applications cease to function we have a very serious issue, but Cisco helps us to keep our business up-and-running 24/7," says Noel Carroll, IT Director for PwC Ireland. "What is more, Cisco's network plays a major role in future-proofing us in terms of emerging technologies."

The Cisco Unified Communications system provides PwC with a platform on which to deploy new services and applications for the business. The first of these is wireless connectivity, which provides staff with greater mobile flexibility. Around 90 percent of the firm's staff have laptops because much of their time is spent working at client sites. While at their office desks, employees have the advantage of connectivity speeds of up to 1 gigabit. The Cisco wireless network also enables them to go to any part of a PwC building and still have access to all their data and applications. In addition, attending meetings and moving between different teams and work groups is easier than before. PwC is also looking at more advanced communications technologies such as Cisco IP Communicator, a piece of software which uses the laptop's microphone and speakers to act as a telephone extension, further enhancing the ability to work while on the move.

The Cisco Unified Communications system has enabled PwC to replace several separate telephone systems – and the associated costs and management time – with a single telephone system for most of the firm. This has had a significant impact on making people and operations more efficient. PwC staff often need to move office, or move into a new work group, and the extension mobility of the Cisco Unified Communications system means it is simply a matter of logging into a phone at a new desk. It requires little if any technical support and is much quicker than before. Other features of the Cisco Unified IP phones – like being able to access the corporate directory, simple conferencing facilities; and a large, easy-to-use screen – make daily telephony quicker and more efficient.



This has an impact on service levels offered to PwC clients because the Cisco IP telephony solution helps the firm's staff be more responsive. Advanced features, like conferencing from a desktop handset and accessing other PwC colleagues, are fast to deploy and easy to manage.

PwC is also looking at how it can use the Cisco Unified Communications system to provide more innovative communications services. It is evaluating issuing dual-mode mobile phones (handsets which can connect via WiFi or a mobile phone network) so that people coming into a PwC office can continue to use their mobile phones instead of swapping to a landline.

Once in range of the Cisco wireless network, mobile calls are automatically re-routed across the Cisco network and out to PwC offices, or externally over public phone lines, lowering mobile phone bills. Other services that PwC is considering include video conferencing.

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Noel Carroll, IT Director, PwC Ireland

The new Cisco Unified Communications system has made a considerable contribution to PwC's business, almost from day one. It helped PwC achieve the single largest people move in Dublin when some 2,000 people moved out of their old offices at the start of the Easter weekend break in 2007 and into the new office at the start of the following week. Carolyn Moore, PwC Ireland's Spencer Dock Transition Programme Manager, says, "This was a substantial move – the equivalent of moving a small town – and the Cisco technology certainly made it a lot easier to move so many people in such a short time; and have everything in place so they could start working immediately. Our objective was to complete the move quickly and with the least disruption to the business. Cisco certainly helped us achieve that."

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