



Oh, What a Difference My Technology Makes

Four Reasons Why Businesses Improve Their Networking

Being smart about ways to use digital technology makes a business work better. Here some Cisco customers share why, and how, they got smarter with their data, voice, and video networking. See if their results match any goals you have for your business.

Attain Peace of Mind

When data and voice systems are reliable and secure, trust replaces uncertainty and doubt. You and your customers-and your suppliers and employees-can do business with focus and confidence.

At amaZulu, Inc. a five-employee architectural materials supplier, old technology hindered communications with customers and suppliers worldwide. Incoming phone calls and messages were often delayed, PCs had no video capability, and employees had to be at their desks to use the phone or access data. Even the warehouse lacked real-time communications.

With a new, reliable network based on wireless access and unified communications (combined voice, video, and data), "I feel very comfortable that our customers are always in the picture and always informed," says Anwar Latib, amaZulu sales manager. "I can give full attention to the more important matters-and have a more comfortable and enjoyable day."

Trust is a guiding principle at 220-employee SBLI USA Life Insurance, where "Protecting customer data is priority number one," says Paul Capizzi, IT vice president. "Security is crucial to our business."

He maintains that keeping customer data private requires an ongoing process of monitoring, internal auditing, and implementing security technologies at multiple layers. So the company uses an ever-changing set of security tools, and relies on its network to either provide or support them. "Having Cisco technology has been key to establishing our 97 percent customer satisfaction rating," says Capizzi.

Improve Network Performance

You may find that a faster network means better customer service, especially if you do business on the Internet.

The Internet is one of the best ways to reach and engage students, and 12-employee Shodor was one of the first educational resources to do it. In 1995 the nonprofit

organization began offering a few online computational science tools to promote math and science education, using a basic one-router/one-switch infrastructure.

As the popularity of its modeling and simulation tools grew, Shodor upgraded its network with additional switches and a more powerful router. With the better network, Shodor now distributes more materials; offers video, data, and voice IP applications; and receives nearly 3.5 million website page views per month from around the world.

Connect Employees and Offices

Using advanced network technologies to connect your staff can allow them to work from anywhere, reduce costs, and make your operations more flexible.

Employees at Parkway Volkswagen and its sister dealership 25 miles away can now be reached wherever they are, at either site, using Cisco Unified Communications technology. A single call center handles all incoming calls, trade parts calls, and service bookings for both dealerships, across the Internet.

"Whichever site you're at, the wireless phone will register so your extension numbers go to it," says Sean Booth, managing director. "It can get so transparent that even internal callers never know where you are. They just think you're next door."

Increase Productivity

Would you like to get more work done with fewer people? Efficiency is one of technology's brightest lights.

Parkway Volkswagen and its sister dealership use their Cisco network to consolidate back-office operations. This reduces costs by eliminating redundant equipment and personnel, and produces the productivity benefits of what Sean Booth calls "standardization of process." "If you have two sites doing the same thing, over time they'll actually start doing different things. By having the thing collectively managed at one site, you'll always have a standardized process."

Out front, the dealerships' service technicians carry IP phones in their pockets. Nigel Evans, service manager, reports that for him alone this saves an hour daily in attempts to communicate with technicians. "With the Cisco phones, a service manager or customer can speak to the technician while he's actually carrying out the diagnostic on the vehicle. It's so easy. It's brilliant."

Better networking may be brilliant for your business, too.

"Before we got our new network, I had no idea that Cisco was even in the small business industry," says Claire Evans, owner of amaZulu. "Now I look at other small businesses and I'd love to say to them, 'You cannot do without this.'"

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