



## The Power of Connections

Keeping your employees connected to people and information anytime, anywhere is a big step toward making your business more efficient. And it's especially important for small and medium-sized businesses like yours.

"Individuals in a small or medium business are much more critical to the overall business than individuals in larger companies," according to Jan Dawson, research director of Ovum Research. "If the general manager is out of contact or cannot access company resources for an extended period of time, this can seriously damage a small business."

To help employees reach the resources they need, many companies are turning to unified communications, which brings together all voice and data communications on a single network. With a virtual private network (VPN), employees can securely connect to your network, even when working from home or on the road.

### **VPN: How You Can Benefit**

VPNs let branch offices and offsite workers connect to the company network over the Internet. Sophisticated encryption protects voice and data traffic every step of the way. VPNs can help your employees work more productively in several ways:

- Employees can work from home, a remote office, or a hotel yet still have secure, reliable access to the company network—just as if they were at your main office.
- Salespeople can access sales tools, customer records, or other resources on your network while at a customer's site.
- Your business can easily provide secure network access to nonemployees, such as contractors who need to update your company's Website.
- Disaster recovery is easier, since employees can securely access company data from any computer, not just the PCs in your office.

A VPN can convert unproductive time into productive hours. For example, Joe Cassell, an account manager for Akrya, a professional services firm providing IT solutions to Global 2000 companies, used to drive 75 miles each way to the main office.

Since Akrya made the transition to a secure Cisco VPN connection, Cassell is able to work at home four days a week. "That's three hours a day I can generate sales instead of sitting in traffic," he adds.

### **Unified Communications: How You Can Benefit**

A unified communications solution lets you move your phone system and other communications services to a single Internet Protocol (IP) network that is easy to manage and maintain. It's cost-effective and lets your employees take advantage of the power of the network to work together more effectively, manage messages more easily, and stay in touch anytime, anywhere.

Unified communications unlock new benefits for your business:

- Bring together your phone system and your customer relationship management (CRM) system. When a customer calls, employees see a pop-up window with all the customer's information on their phone or PC.
- Have one phone number ring simultaneously on multiple phones, so employees never miss a call.
- Allow employees to work from home or a different office yet keep the same phone number, so they can be easily reached.
- Use an automated attendant to answer the company phone and intelligently route calls. Employees can customize call screening and message handling.
- Save time and money with videoconferencing and teleconferencing to let employees collaborate from anywhere.

A unified communications solution can even help you streamline business processes, such as time cards and staffing. For example, Tucson-based Zeus Nestora, a franchisee of Subway restaurants, lets employees clock in to work using Cisco Unified IP Phones and software that runs directly on the phone displays.

If someone calls in sick, the IP phones' software automatically determines which employees aren't currently working and finds those who want an additional shift. Then the system calls each eligible employee, one by one. If an employee wants the shift, he or she simply presses a key.

### **Solutions from Cisco**

Cisco makes it easy for you to move to a network solution at the pace that's right for you. Using a roadmap approach, your Cisco reseller or service provider works closely with you to build the solution that aligns best with your business needs. And Cisco Capital offers flexible leasing and financing options that are right for you.

Designed and priced for small and medium-sized businesses, Cisco solutions enable you to:

- [Connect employees and offices](#): Make it easy for employees to share business information and keep in touch with customers, colleagues, and business partners.
- [Serve customers better](#): Respond to customers more quickly and deliver more knowledgeable service using phone and network tools.
- [Work from anywhere](#): Enable employees to collaborate easily, whether in the office or on the road.
- [Secure your business](#): Protect your most important business assets from hackers, viruses, and other threats.
- [Be more productive](#): Help your employees accomplish more and work together more easily, inside and outside the office

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### **Next Steps:**

Find [Cisco reseller Partners](#) in your area that serve small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs)

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See the range of [Cisco solutions for SMBs](#)

Learn more about [connecting employees and offices](#)

See how to [provide secure remote access](#)

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