



Customer Case Study

Healthcare Provider Consolidates and Optimizes Siebel CRM Servers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INDUSTRY

- Healthcare

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Maximize user productivity for Siebel CRM applications (potentially 4000 active sessions)
- Consolidate data center server resources to lower CAPEX
- Simplify management to lower OPEX

NETWORK SOLUTION

Cisco for Applications/Siebel platform including:

- Redundant Cisco 11503 Content Services Switches (CSSs) for the development environment
- Redundant Cisco 11506 CSSs for staging and production environments.

BUSINESS RESULTS:

- Off-loading SSL operations for Siebel CRM application servers improves scalability across fewer servers
- Multivendor solution was replaced by the Cisco CSSs, minimizing support efforts
- Stateful failover capabilities help ensure continuous, uninterrupted operation of the mission-critical Siebel applications

Cisco for Applications/Siebel provides a highly available and scalable solution for mission-critical enterprise applications.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Healthcare encompasses one of the world's largest and fastest-growing industries, consuming more than 10 percent of the gross national product for most developed nations. In the United States, as in many other countries, healthcare reform has been debated for several decades, with cost reduction consistently remaining a top priority for both the public consumers and providers. A major provider of healthcare in the southern United States initiated data center consolidation projects over recent years as one way to reduce costs. Minimizing the number of servers achieved the goals for cost savings, but introduced the need to more efficiently balance applications over fewer resources.

The application infrastructure included load balancing and Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) off-loading for the provider's Siebel deployment, but it had evolved into a cobbled-together combination of products from multiple vendors. Cisco Local Directors were combined with an SSL off-load product and a software-based front-end load balancer, both from other vendors. Managing the products became very cumbersome. The Siebel deployment at this company included Siebel 7.7 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) enterprise software. This mission-critical application supported the daily work of more than 4000 customer service representatives supporting more than 8 million

customers. Potentially, all of the representatives could be accessing the Siebel applications, making it critical that servers could meet and exceed this load for current and future demand.

The provider's requirements were not solely focused on the performance of the Siebel applications. Given the large number of support issues surrounding the provider's previous solution, manageability of the application infrastructure was a priority. The provider also wanted to be able to easily address application scalability, without a complex server load balancing and SSL off-loading solution.

NETWORK SOLUTION

The healthcare provider's IT team operated application facilities that spanned three environments: development, stage, and production. New technology being evaluated is first brought into the testing facilities. During this evaluation phase, IT evaluated Cisco for Applications/Siebel for scalability, ease of integration with other elements such as CiscoWorks, and manageability. After a comparison with alternative solutions from competing vendors, the healthcare provider selected the Cisco platform including the Cisco CSS.

The Cisco CSS minimizes the number of servers required to host the modularized Siebel applications. Since the number of servers required for enterprise applications such as Siebel is growing exponentially, the Cisco CSS plays a vital role for data center consolidation. Cisco for Applications/Siebel was initially selected for a variety of reasons, all of which benefited the company's Siebel deployment:

- **Scalable application transaction performance** – An integrated, high-capacity SSL module allows off-loading SSL to improve the overall performance of the Web and application servers, enabling better application performance.
- **Optimized application response time** – The Cisco CSS provides a high-capacity Web application (Hypertext Transfer Protocol, HTTP) compression module that improves application response times by 20 to 50 percent. This feature also off-loads compression from the server, which reduces server workload and decreases required WAN bandwidth, thereby further lowering cost.
- **Familiar software interface** – The Cisco CSS, with Cisco WebNS software, has a CISCO IOS-like user interface. Already familiar with IOS, the healthcare provider’s IT team required no additional or minimal training for the Cisco CSS.
- **Modular design of the Cisco CSS** – The competition’s product, with a fixed design, did not allow interface expansion. Cisco’s ability to scale was a winning feature. The customer recognized the drawbacks of the competitor’s fixed port and system design, and chose to avoid the forklift upgrades that would be required to accommodate any future changes in their environment. More than any other content switch in its class, the Cisco CSS allows customizing combinations of ports, performance, and services.
- **Availability and application integrity** – The industry-standard Adaptive Session Redundancy capability supports stateful failover for helping ensure continuous operation of the enterprise applications.
- **On-site pre-sales support** – During the evaluation process, the customer evaluated the support provided by the local Cisco office. Access to expert on-site assistance was a priority requirement. Cisco services and support options—including a two-hour global replacement services option—were superior to the competition’s capabilities.
- **Corporate commitment** – The customer was very convinced of Cisco’s commitment to Enterprise Data Center products and judged Cisco to be the best partner over the long term. Acquiring certification of the Cisco CSS with Siebel 7.7 further underscored the Cisco commitment and assured the customer of the effective working relationships between Cisco and Siebel.

The healthcare provider deployed Cisco for Applications/Siebel with a total of two Cisco 11503 CSSs and four Cisco 11506 CSSs for Siebel high availability, scalability, and server off-load capability. An additional 12 Cisco CSSs were later purchased for other applications as a result of the success of this initial deployment.

“As enterprise applications become increasingly complex and Web-centric, application delivery technology becomes more vital to the success of the companies that depend on them. The Cisco for Applications delivery and acceleration solutions help ensure that customers can extract the most value possible from these application investments.”

—Doug Gourlay, Senior Director, Data Center Solutions Marketing, Cisco Systems

BUSINESS RESULTS

To a large degree, customer satisfaction determines the overall success of any healthcare provider. This market reality puts a great deal of attention on CRM applications. The deployment of the Cisco for Applications/Siebel solution introduced improved application acceleration, availability, scalability, and security for this healthcare provider’s critical software, resulting in several benefits to the overall business:

- **User productivity** – The Cisco CSS helps ensure that performance requirements are not compromised as a result of data center consolidation. Server reduction goals were met while protecting the productivity of the service representatives, and thereby maintaining customer satisfaction levels.

PRODUCT LIST

Cisco for Applications:

High Availability, Scalability, SSL Offloading,
and Compression

- Cisco 11500 Series CSS

- Simplified administration – Replacing a three-vendor solution with a single-vendor, flexible solution has reduced management requirements and contributed to lowered operating costs.
- Business continuity – The high-availability features (stateful failover) protect mission-critical operations and allow the provider to meet its business goals in terms of customer service.

“As enterprise applications become increasingly complex and Web-centric, application delivery technology becomes more vital to the success of the companies that depend on them,” says Doug Gourlay, senior director of data center solutions marketing at Cisco. “The Cisco for Applications delivery and acceleration solutions help ensure that customers can extract the most value possible from these application investments.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about the Cisco Data Center Solutions including Cisco for Applications solutions, go to:

<http://www.cisco.com/go/applicationservices>.



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