

Small Architecture Firm Keeps Pace with Large Competitors

Studio G Architects relies on Cisco Small Business Unified Communications Solution to collaborate with customers and vendors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Studio G Architects, Inc.

- Industry: Architecture
- Employees: 8
- Location: San Jose, CA

CHALLENGE

- Enable timely, efficient communication and collaboration with architecture clients, contractors, and vendors

SOLUTION

- Cisco Small Business Unified Communications 300 Series (Model UC320W) and Cisco SPA500 Series IP Phones provide complete voice and data communication with built-in wireless networking in a single affordable solution.

RESULTS

- Business-class phone and messaging solution helps clients reach the right employee faster, improves employee responsiveness and overall competitiveness.

Challenge

Small businesses are continually looking for new ways to extend their reach and serve customers better. For Studio G Architects, a growing commercial architecture firm based in San Jose, California, the right communications solution would enable the organization to target new market opportunities.

“We started our business three years ago, and within the last year, we have grown substantially,” says Kelly Simcox, owner of Studio G Architects, Inc. “We are competing for projects against firms that are substantially larger than ours.”

Simcox and two colleagues started Studio G Architects in her garage with two shared phone lines. As the company became more successful, Simcox needed to update her phone system to a solution that would help her take the business to the next level.

“We had grown to five employees, and were moving to a new office space,” says Simcox. “We knew we had to come up with better

communications. It was critical to have a real phone system with messaging and voice mailboxes to present a professional image to clients. And we needed a way to free our employees from relying on their cell phones.”

Effective communication plays a vital role in helping architects understand their client needs, provide regular progress updates, and move projects forward on time and on budget.

“As a small business, we need to offer our clients the same customer-focused experience that they enjoy with larger firms. It has been a huge advantage to give everyone in our organization access to a direct line. Clients no longer feel that they have to place all their calls through me, and have me route them to the right person.”

– Kelly Simcox, Owner, Studio G Architects, Inc.

“We deal with general contractors on a daily basis, and they are almost as important as working with our clients,” says Simcox. “We also work with a variety of vendors, and are constantly scheduling appointments to see their latest products, building materials, and finishes as we perform research for projects.”

Studio G Architects needed a complete phone system that would provide business-class communication and messaging. It would have to be affordable, yet easy to use, as well as scalable to grow along with the company.

Results

After moving to its new office, Studio G Architects installed the Cisco® Small Business Unified Communications 300 Series. Designed specifically for small businesses, the solution delivers everything that Studio G Architects needs to extend rich voice and data communications across the entire company. Now all employees have access to their own phone extension, making it easier for clients to reach the person they need immediately.

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The Cisco solution includes a built-in automated attendant that directs incoming calls directly to employees with no delays.

“We don’t have a dedicated receptionist, so we let the automated attendant serve as our point of contact,” says Simcox. “It helps us route our calls to the right person faster. If a client needs to speak with someone immediately, they can dial zero, all the office lines will ring, and an employee will pick up.”

The solution also features powerful voice messaging to help ensure that employees can respond to clients fast, even if they miss a call.

“Having access to voicemail and being able to transfer messages to anyone in the office has been huge,” says Simcox. “It helps us get back to clients in a more timely manner. The solution also enables us to automatically forward voice messages to email, which is a great advantage when we are away from our desks. We plan to start using it soon.”

Simcox can respond to clients and prospects even if they don’t leave a message, because the Cisco solution includes caller ID and easy-to-use call logging.

“The last phone that I was using didn’t offer the ability to review missed calls and call logs like you can on the Cisco phones,” says Simcox. “Having that caller ID feature and being able to identify missed calls is great, and makes it much easier to call back customers and potential clients.”

The Cisco solution is much more than a phone system. It also supports data networking, as well as a built-in wireless access point for mobile networking inside the office.

“The Cisco system includes built-in wireless support, which gives us the ability to stay connected throughout the office,” says Simcox. “I use wireless connectivity for my tablet computer.”

Solution

Studio G Architects built its communications system around the Cisco Small Business Unified Communications 300 Series, a complete platform with rich features specifically for small businesses. Part of the Cisco Small Business product family, the solution is affordable, dependable, and easy to install and use.

PRODUCT LIST

- Cisco Small Business Unified Communications 300 Series
- Cisco SPA500 Series IP Phones

“The Cisco solution went up very quickly and seamlessly,” says Simcox. “Learning the basic functions went very smoothly for me.”

Simcox chose the solution after hearing positive feedback about Cisco technology from customers and colleagues.

“We had several clients who were small startup organizations themselves, so I asked them what they were using,” says Simcox. “They all highly recommended Cisco solutions, and Cisco’s brand name and reputation gave us a good level of comfort.”

For clear voice communication, Studio G Architects added Cisco SPA500 Series IP Phones. Reliable, stylish, and cost-effective, these small business phones feature backlit displays for easy call transfers and other onscreen applications. They also support Power over Ethernet (PoE) for simple installation, without the need for a separate power cable.

“We are using the Cisco SPA504G Series 4-line IP Phones, as well as the Cisco SPA525G2 IP Phone, which includes a color display screen,” says Simcox.

Studio G Architects plans to use a single voice and data network to save money on monthly communications charges. Making changes and adding new employees are simple, because the Cisco Unified Communications 300 Series can be managed with a web browser, instead of an expensive call to the phone company. And as new employees join, Studio G Architects can easily add inexpensive switches or more Cisco SPA Series IP Phones to support growth.

“We are definitely planning to add more phones, and we are still exploring new features, such as conferencing, that we will begin using soon,” says Simcox.

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco Small Business Unified Communications 300 Series, visit:

www.cisco.com/go/uc300.



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