

Real Estate Firm Eases Moves and Improves Service with IP Telephony

Curci Asset Management deployed Cisco Unified Communications Manager Express with the Cbeyond[®] BeyondVoice[®] with SIPconnect service.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>CURCI ASSET MANAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Services • Southern California • 15 employees
<p>BUSINESS CHALLENGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire reliable voice system • Facilitate two office moves in less than nine months • Simplify support and billing for voice and data services
<p>NETWORK SOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisco Unified Communications Manager Express • Cbeyond BeyondVoice with SIPconnect managed service
<p>BUSINESS RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saved US\$1000 as a result of SIP support • Saved US\$4500 on cable drops • Improved customer service

Business Challenge

Curci Asset Management acquires, finances, and develops commercial real estate properties in Southern California. A 15-person firm, Curci outsources management of its voice and data systems to Akins Consulting, a Cisco[®] Premier Partner.

When Curci needed to relocate to temporary offices while its permanent offices were remodeled, the company asked Akins Consulting to recommend a new voice system. “Their aging key system was unreliable, and the company did not want to incur the expense of moving it twice,” says Shawn Akins, CEO of Akins Consulting. “Curci needed a reliable and affordable voice system that would also be easy to deploy, maintain, and move.” Another requirement for the new voice system would be

mobility. The company’s executives wanted employees to have the flexibility to work from any location in the building rather than only from a designated workstation. The company’s networking equipment was also due for an upgrade.

The day before the move, the unexpected occurred: Curci’s key system was damaged by flooding. Curci had intended to continue using it during the week of the move, while a new phone system was deployed in the temporary offices. Restoring the old system would take a full week, an unacceptable delay. The company urgently needed a way to continue to make and receive phone calls related to time-sensitive real estate transactions.

Network Solution

Akins Consulting had already recommended Cisco Unified Communications Manager Express and Cisco Unity Express voicemail, which are built into the Cisco Integrated Services Router (ISR), and the Cbeyond BeyondVoice with SIPconnect managed service. Designed for small and growing businesses, the Cbeyond service is an integrated package of voice, mobile, and broadband Internet services that follows the SIPconnect specification to ensure consistent quality of service, low cost, and full-featured telephony for SIP-based voice-over-IP calls. Cbeyond developed the SIPconnect specification with Cisco and other industry leaders to connect its private, managed VoIP network to next-generation IP PBX systems. “With the Cbeyond BeyondVoice with SIPconnect managed service, Curci enjoys a T1 connection, which is much faster than its previous

DSL service; individual phone numbers for every employee; and the convenience of a single bill,” says Greg Rothman, director of SIPconnect development at Cbeyond.

“Connection to the service provider network did not require the purchase of interface cards or time-consuming integration work because both Cisco Unified Communications Manager Express and the Cbeyond BeyondVoice service comply with the SIPconnect standard.”

—Shawn Akins, CEO, Akins Consulting

When the old phone system suddenly failed, Akins Consulting, which had already ordered the Cisco ISR, was able to deploy the complete voice solution in just one day. “We simply installed the router and connected the Cisco Unified IP Phones,” says Akins. “Connection to the service provider network did not require the purchase of interface cards or time-consuming integration work because both Cisco Unified Communications Manager Express and the Cbeyond BeyondVoice service comply with the SIPconnect standard.” Using the Cisco Quick Configuration Tool, Akins completed most of the configuration in just 30 minutes, and then customized each employee’s phone with personalized buttons and speed dial numbers.

The following day, when Curci moved to its temporary offices, Akins simply disconnected the Cisco ISR and Cisco Unified IP Phones and reconnected them in the temporary offices, adding a Cisco PIX firewall to secure voice and data traffic. “Connecting the Cisco ISR took just minutes, avoiding any disruption to the business,” says Akins. To enable executives to make and receive calls anywhere in the building, Akins deployed a Cisco Aironet® wireless access point and provided the executives with Cisco Unified Wireless IP Phones.

Akins Consulting manages the Cisco ISR, which Curci owns, and Cbeyond owns and manages the Cisco Integrated Access Device that connects Curci to the Cbeyond network. “Cisco Unified Communications Manager Express is the right fit for a company the size of Curci,” says Akins. “The Cisco ISR with built-in Cisco Unified Communications Manager Express and Cisco Unity Express voicemail satisfies the company’s voice and data requirements with a single device.”

Business Results

The new voice solution reduced costs for Curci, strengthening its relationship with Akins Consulting. One source of savings is the built-in SIP support in Cisco Unified Communications Manager Express, which eliminated the \$1000 cost of a separate interface card. Another source of savings is that Curci needed only one cable drop instead of separate voice and data cable drops in its temporary as well as its remodeled permanent offices, saving \$150 to \$200 per drop for each office. With 15 offices in each of two locations, the savings add up to more than \$4500. Cisco Unified Communications Manager Express reduced moving expenses, as well, by eliminating the cost of moving a bulky key system twice.

Customer service has also improved. The Cbeyond BeyondVoice with SIPconnect service enables each employee to have an individual phone number. Therefore, rather than dialing a main phone number and then entering an extension, Curci's customers can now dial an employee directly. Individual phone numbers also save time for Curci employees, who no longer need to answer and transfer each other's calls. Without SIP, providing individual phone numbers would have required Akins to deploy a separate gateway, increasing costs.

PRODUCT LIST

Routing and Switching

- Cisco 2801 Integrated Services Router

Security and VPN

- Cisco PIX Firewall

Cisco Unified Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager Express (formerly Cisco Unified CallManager Express)
- Cisco Unified IP Phones

Wireless

- Cisco Aironet Wireless Access Point

Finally, the new solution simplifies support. With its converged voice-and-data network, Curci can now call Akins Consulting for any network-related need. Akins Consulting, in turn, can offer competitive pricing because the converged network is easier to manage. All customers who subscribe to the Cbeyond service can log into CbeyondOnline, Cbeyond's intuitive online account management portal, from any location with Internet access. The portal provides access to more than 20 productivity applications included with the BeyondVoice with SIPconnect integrated communications package. To

simplify bill payment, all of its Cbeyond services are combined onto one bill, which Curci can pay online.

Akins concludes, "The SIP-based solution provides measurable business value for Curci, which has strengthened our relationship."



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