

CISCO HELPS BUSINESS SERVICES GROUP CUT ANNUAL PHONE BILL IN HALF BY £180,000

Across several diverse business functions, Lorien has deployed a Cisco IP foundation network and Unified Communications system that has cut annual telephone bills by 50 percent and helped to increase customer communications and service delivery.

Creating service differentiation

Lorien plc is best known as a recruitment company – it ranks 29th in the top 100 in the UK – specialising in IT (Lorien Resourcing). But it also offers other business services such as digital printing (Lorien Unique), research (Lorien Research), project management and engineering (Lorien Engineering Solutions) and training (Lorien Training). The company has six offices around the UK and employs 400 people.

In the recruitment business particularly, competition is becoming fierce with margins being constantly squeezed. As a consequence, companies like Lorien need to differentiate their services by improving quality, responsiveness and availability. One aspect that has changed within the recruitment business is the shift away from paper to electronic delivery of items like reports to customers, candidate CVs and timesheet, and improving communication and information sharing. To support these value-add features and functionality, and bandwidth intensive applications, Lorien needed to improve its network infrastructure and support new technologies like IP telephony, while at the same time aiming to reduce costs.

Cisco means quality and value for money

Lorien decided to work with Cisco to help it achieve these goals. Chris Lord, IT director for the Lorien group, says, “In my view Cisco are the only provider with an extensive range of products to enable us to build a complete end-to-end solution and Cisco delivers quality and value for money. We’ve had Cisco equipment running for two to three years and it’s never needed to be re-booted. What we’re after is reliable, network availability and that is what Cisco does.”

Lord adds that because of Cisco’s market penetration, its products are tried and tested in a wide range of environments giving confidence in their robustness and reliability. Also, Cisco account management and sales engineers proved knowledgeable and helpful in advising on the project.

Lorien has upgraded its UK Wide Area Network (WAN) and Local Area Networks (LANs) at its offices. The infrastructure supports a Cisco Unified Communications system comprising Cisco Unified IP phones and Cisco Unified Messaging for 400 staff.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CUSTOMER NAME

- Lorien Group

INDUSTRY

- Business Services

BUSINESS SIZE

- Mid-market

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Create service differentiation
- Head off greater market competition
- Work within increasingly tight margins
- Improve customer communication and service

NETWORK SOLUTION

- Cisco foundation network
- Unified Communications system

BUSINESS VALUE

- Cuts telephony cost by 50 percent a year
- Improves working and communicating with customers
- Consistent, high performance from customer satisfaction survey

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The new network platform has also been used by Lorien to create Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to improve remote communications, as in a number of cases, Lorien businesses will set up temporary offices on new-build sites or locate staff within a customer's office. A Cisco VPN enables these staff to get faster and secure access to Lorien's internal business applications. The whole of the network integrates a range of Cisco network security products including intrusion detection and firewalls.

Since the Cisco network infrastructure and Unified Communications system has been deployed, Lorien has received support and utilisation services from IP Ltd, a Cisco partner.

Cisco delivers huge cost savings for Lorien Group

For a business that relies heavily on individuals communicating, Lorien Group overall has seen significant cost saving as a result of working with Cisco, its business partners and Lorien's service provider, Telstra. The company's annual telephone bill has fallen by 50 percent from £360,000 to £180,000, a saving that could deliver a return on investment for the whole project within two to three years. These savings have been achieved by routing inter-office calls across the network rather than over public phone lines and centralising breakout call traffic to and from the public telephone network. Further savings have been achieved by reducing management and maintenance costs because the data and voice networks have been converged.

Lord says, "Cisco is a key element in our ability to react quickly in an ever changing market place, and to provide the best in customer and client service. And now we are actively investigating further enhancements to the Cisco infrastructure to further improve our business offering and reduce operational costs."

For example, Lorien is geographically dispersed throughout the UK and the cost of travel and management time in attending meetings is high. The company is evaluating the use of video conferencing with a view to reducing these costs and improving management efficiency. It is also looking at other technologies like call centre automation and integrating PDA connectivity.

Cisco helps Lorien Engineering improve customer satisfaction

Lorien Engineering Solutions (LES) is an engineering consultancy, dealing with capital projects ranging between £5m to £30m in the fast-moving consumer goods sector. The Cisco Unified Communications system and VPN technology is helping LES staff communicate and work with customers much more effectively.

Bill Treddenick, LES director, says, "Our clients are under enormous pressure from their customers and so we need to become ever more efficient to meet their expectations. We rely on close team working, both internally and with client teams and we also need staff to be mobile, either working from home, within client offices or in construction site offices. VPN connectivity enables us to work on client sites and connect into our core services such as our knowledge management system. Staff can access email and other systems anywhere in the world by using VPN. Compared to the technology we were using before, the Cisco solution is in another league. We now have an IT infrastructure that many can only dream of."

Treddenick adds that for LES the most important feature is client satisfaction and feedback on communications for the past two years has been classed as 'Always Conforms' in 9 out of 10 cases.

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Lorien Unique increases responsive with Cisco

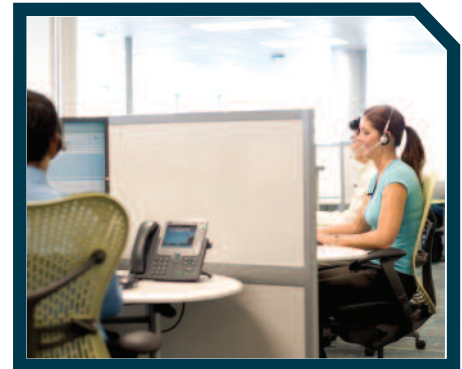
Matthew Diamond, managing director, of Lorien Unique, a digital market service, says, "The Unique brand is a technological and innovative business development involved in the creation of high quality, customised, personalised, digital direct marketing solutions. Our customers rely on these solutions to capitalise on creative impact, increasing response rates, reinforcing brand identity and maximise their return on investment. Cisco technology has helped us to deliver these business benefits: firstly by improving our responsiveness through raw network horsepower and reliability to underpin the press and pre-press design workflow; secondly, by providing a modern and flexible IP telephony system with the potential for computer telephony integration with our future CRM and workflow systems; and thirdly by minimising our cost base in areas such as cabling and telecoms charges to give us a competitive edge."

Lorien's digital printing business has one of the most advanced digital printers in world and is one of only two or three in Europe. Dealing with digital printing files demands huge processing and data communication capability and, according to Chris Lord, the power and reliability of the network has been critical to enabling the business to deliver digital printing services to customer quickly and efficiently.

Cisco technology proves invaluable for Lorien Resourcing

The Cisco Communications solution has been welcomed by users across the organisation. Staff such Rachel Cordingley and Jonathan Long, regional directors for Lorien Resourcing, the recruiting arm of the business, say that features such as the ability to login in any Lorien office and pick up messages; to keep and forward phone messages on email, and the employee directory is particularly invaluable for new staff.

Cordingley says, "The Cisco telephone system has some great features. But the best feature is voicemail. When a new voicemail arrives it also registers as a new email in your inbox and can be either played from your PC or you can prompt the phone to call you with the message; and the fact that message can be forwarded by email so that others can listen to the same message can be very useful."



We have an IT infrastructure that many can only dream of.



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