

Glacier 3000-Les Diablerets A Swiss Ski Resort Implements a Voice-Over-IP Infrastructure to Ensure Immediate Communications throughout Whole Mountain



BEING STUCK IN A FIERCE SNOW BLIZZARD ON A 3000 METER SUMMIT WITH A WALKIE TALKIE THAT KEEPS CUTTING OUT ON YOU ISN'T A PLEASANT FEELING. ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OPERATIONS OF AN ENTIRE MOUNTAIN SKI RESORT.

THE EXECUTIVE MANAGER OF THE GLACIER 3000-LES DIABLERETS SKI RESORT, PIERRE MATHEY, AGREES. "IT'S IMPORTANT THAT MY STAFF HAS TO BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER VERY QUICKLY AND CLEARLY IN CASE OF A STRONG STORM OR A RIDER PROBLEM. WE HAVE TO MAKE EMERGENCY DECISIONS FAST, SO WE NEED SOLID COMMUNICATIONS."

Glacier 3000-Les Diablerets, is just 70 miles outside of Geneva and receives 120,000 visitors a year. With plans to double the number of yearly visitors to 240,000 Mathey needed a better communications method for manage operations. So he turned to Cisco for a voice-over-IP solution that would connect the whole mountain.

The Challenge

According to Mathey, the major challenge at Glacier 3000-Les Diablerets was how to improve communications from the base to the summit, at 3000 meters, and to various outposts throughout the mountain. "Glacier 3000 had no network at all, just old-world analog telephones and walkie-talkies, which often had very bad reception. And there were no fixed communications to talk with people at the top of the mountain, only cellular telephones, which also provided poor quality, and were quite expensive."

In addition, Mathey wanted to have a direct network communications link from the new cable car and chair lift to the web, as well as to various tourist offices and travel agencies. "We want to provide the latest information about conditions on the mountain, in the form of video and data, to potential visitors. This just wasn't possible with the old system. So we decided to go with a Cisco multiservice-network solution," says Mathey.

"Cisco technology gives us one system for voice, video, and data, rather than three separate systems. Our Cisco solution offers us lots of application choices and excellent technical support."

*Pierre Mathey,
Executive Manager,
Glacier 3000 Les Diablerets.*

Why Cisco?

Mathey says he chose a Cisco solution for three reasons. "The first reason was the voice-over-IP technology and the choices it will offer us for the future. Second was the solid relationship with the Cisco support team, and third was the cost-effective price."

"Cisco technology gives us one system for voice, video and data, rather than three separate systems. Our Cisco solution offers us lots of application choices and excellent technical support," says Mathey. "With Cisco, we won't need another system in the future. We can develop various parts of this new system as our communication infrastructure needs grow."

The Solution

Mathey and his team worked with applitec AG, the network integrator of sunrise communications, to implement a Cisco voice-over-IP network using the Cisco series 3600 multiservice access router at the IT operations center at the base of the mountain. The 3600 router acts as a gateway to the public switched telephone network (PSTN). In addition, Glacier 3000 has 13 Cisco IP telephones installed in outpost stations throughout the mountain, including the summit. Four Cisco series 2600 routers are also installed at outpost stations which connect old-world analog phones to the voice-over-IP network.

“Now we have voice communications all over the mountain, plus we also have a new ski-pass system running on the same network,” says Mathey. “It’s hands free—visitors ski through a check point with a pass in their pockets. The ski pass system used to be running on an analog modem. Now we have it on the Cisco system with an ISDN modem connected into the network. It’s much more efficient on the slopes.”

Mathey says he’s planning to add video onto the same network infrastructure within the next year. “We’ll have video screens on the ski slopes to give daily video and photo reports to visitors via our Web site about such conditions as snow quality, weather, and which runs are open.”

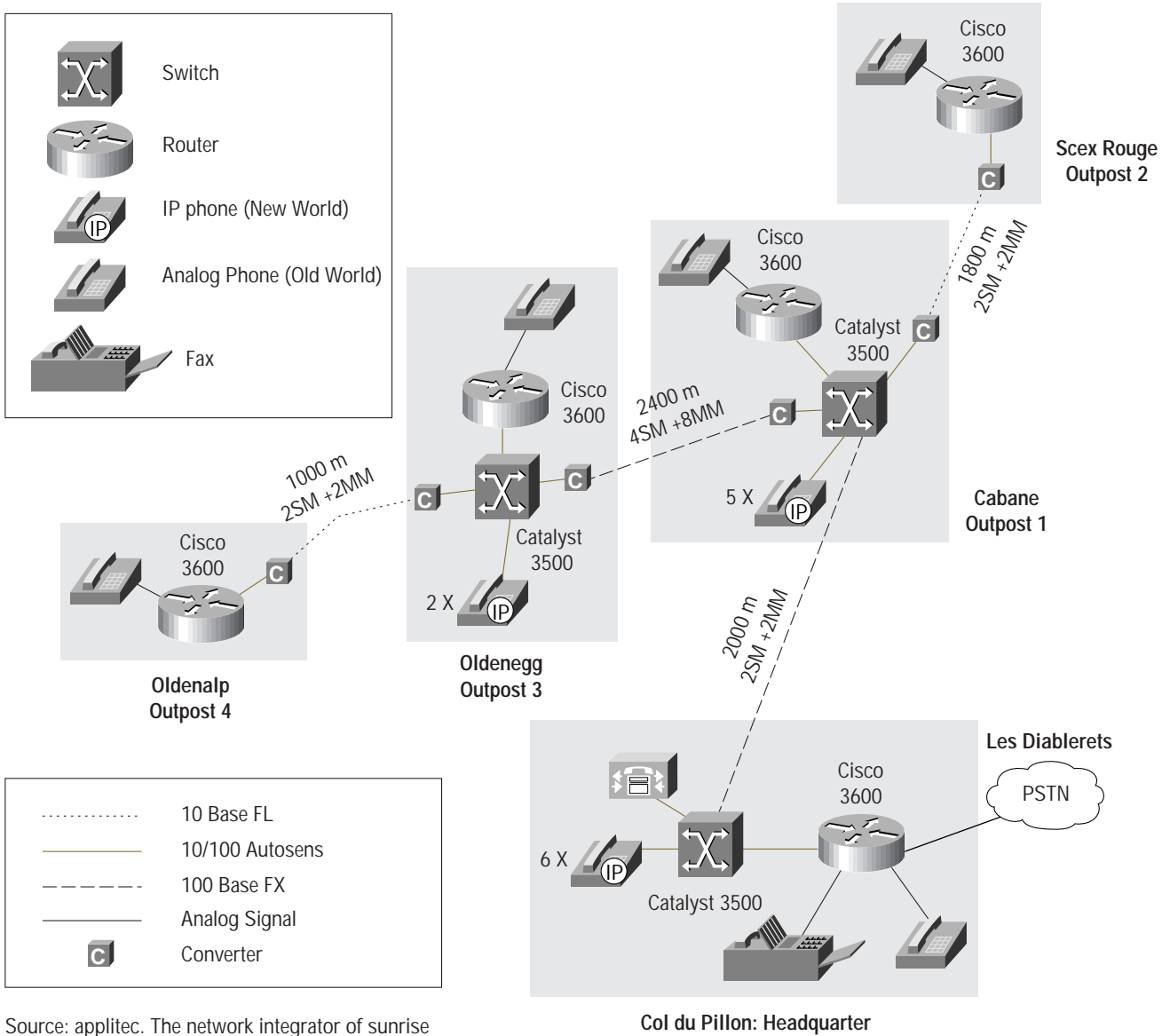
“We also plan to use our new network to communicate maintenance issues from the ski installations back to the headquarters remotely. We’ll save time and money by having less employees at each station,” continues Mathey.

The Results

“The best thing about our new Cisco solution is that we can run all of our voice, video and data applications on the network we’ve created today,” says Mathey. “It provides us very good voice quality, and it’s very easy to use. We also save a considerable amount of money every month by eliminating external telephone costs.”

“Having the Cisco voice-over-IP system has made my job easier because I can communicate directly and perfectly to my employees the first time, which makes operations and decision making much more effective. In addition, I have many possibilities in which to expand and develop my solution. Today, there is no limit as to what I can do with our new Cisco network, which is very exciting,” says Mathey.

Figure 1 Topology Diagram of the Glacier 3000-Les Diablerets Network



Source: aplitec. The network integrator of sunrise



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