

Outsource Partners International

Combining voice and data on a single network dramatically reduces monthly telephone costs

A Cisco AVVID network has helped this global outsourcing firm eliminate pricey conference calls and enjoy convenient, low-cost voice communication with its processing center in Bangalore, India.

“Although the initial investment for Cisco’s network was more expensive than if we had used other vendors, the solution has saved us a lot of money on phone costs and the network has proved very reliable. At this rate, our investment will pay for itself very quickly.”

Glen Baker
Director of Technology,
Outsource Partners International

Outsource Partners International (OPI) is a leading business process outsourcing firm specializing in finance and accounting services. OPI’s expertise in finance, accounting and process improvement comes from its employees’ significant professional experience. Nearly all of OPI’s senior managers have operational experience as controllers and chief financial officers. OPI associates have extensive public accounting experience and many have held finance and accounting leadership positions for major companies with worldwide operations. Most of OPI’s management and professional staff joined the company through the acquisition of KPMG LLP’s (KPMG) Business Process Outsourcing Division.

All that experience has led OPI to create an outsourcing model that embodies a unique mix of people, processes, and technology designed to drive cost reductions, efficiencies and improved quality for its clients. OPI’s customized approach seamlessly integrates onsite personnel with offshore processing, through its ISO 9001-certified Bangalore processing center.

With annual revenues of approximately \$30 million and more than 300 employees, OPI is the largest outsourcing company solely focused on finance and accounting services. OPI has over 50 clients in various industries whose annual revenues range from \$25 million to almost \$3 billion.

High monthly telephone costs

In order to maintain quality control and serve its clients effectively, OPI must ensure 24-hour voice communication between its six U.S. offices and the company’s transaction processing facility in Bangalore. As a result, the company was incurring substantial international long-distance phone charges every month. Compounding the problem, its new U.S. branch offices acquired from KPMG need to place frequent conference calls between locations—also resulting in significant charges.

“We looked at solutions like instant messaging,” says Glen Baker, OPI’s Director of Technology. “Unfortunately, it’s just not the same as being able to pick up the telephone and have a real-time conversation.” Baker knew that IP telephony was the logical answer to the problem, so he asked several networking vendors for proposals, including Cisco Systems.

Because of his past experience with Cisco, Baker was confident in the company as a networking provider, but felt he needed to perform “due diligence” on the IP telephony side. Ultimately, he chose Cisco AVVID (Architecture for Voice, Video and Integrated Data), though other providers offered less expensive solutions.

“The other vendors promised us roadmaps, but never delivered anything except ‘concepts.’ Cisco was the only company to present us with a true one-wire solution,

with voice and data traveling over a single network,” says Baker. “Plus, they demonstrated to us that they are truly committed to IP and have the applications that we need right now, like the Cisco Conference Connection. Their architecture will also enable us to easily add things like video in the future.”

OPI’s network is built around Cisco Catalyst® 4000 Series switches at its data center. Cisco Catalyst 3600 and 2600 Series routers provide connectivity, while call processing, signaling, connection services, and voice messaging are handled by clustered Cisco CallManager software. Cisco 7960 and 7940 handsets furnish individual phone access for OPI personnel at its U.S. offices and offshore processing center in India. Baker recently added Cisco Conference Connection for OPI’s new regional U.S. offices acquired from KPMG.

Dramatic cost savings

Since implementing the Cisco IP telephony solution, OPI has enjoyed immediate economic benefits. “Currently, we’re saving over \$14,000 a month in international long-distance charges because we eliminated the separate circuit for voice,” says Baker. “Plus, our employees in the U.S. and Bangalore, India, can now contact one another with simple, four-digit dialing, making voice communication more convenient as well as less expensive.”

Baker also attributes other cost savings to the Cisco Conference Connection, which he recently added. “Because we were using external conference calling before, it was costing us about \$4,000 a month in usage fees,” he says. “By eliminating those fees, Cisco Conference Connection will pay for itself in less than four months.”

On the horizon: video learning and Cisco Call Center

OPI’s Cisco network also provides the foundation for future applications that will enable the company to become even more cost-efficient. “We’re already looking at video for training our personnel in Bangalore,” says Baker. Because OPI provides onsite staffing for many of its clients, Baker is also investigating Cisco Call Center. “We think it would enable us to serve our clients more efficiently by providing better phone coverage,” Baker adds.

The bottom line: high-quality service and lower cost of ownership

Baker is also very pleased with the quality of service he has received from Cisco. “Our account manager, Bill Kohut, and Paul Crespo, our systems engineer, have always gone the extra distance for us,” he says. “They have offered us helpful advice and also introduced us to ShoreGroup, a Cisco IP Telephony Specialized value-added reseller for integration services. After the initial project, the Cisco account team continues to maintain close contact with us and keeps us up to date on different technology solutions that could help us run our business more effectively.”

Baker suggests that other companies looking at IP telephony “look at ownership costs, not hardware costs. Although the initial investment for Cisco’s network was more expensive than if we had used other vendors, the solution has saved us a lot of money on phone costs and the network has proved very reliable. Plus, we’ve got the architecture to add the future applications we’ll need. At this rate, our investment will pay for itself very quickly.”



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