



Accenture Takes IP Telephony to the Cutting Edge.

Not content to be a follower, the Singapore office of this global consultancy set out to install the most cutting-edge—and the most cost-effective—telephone system it could find.

The Background

When the world's leading management and technology consultancy goes in search of a cutting-edge telephone system for a key regional office, it can expect that many other businesses will take notice of the outcome. That's reason enough to study Accenture's quest to identify such a system when it moved its Singapore headquarters last year.

Accenture has a long tradition of advising clients on technology that will offer both cost-effective and superior performance. With 75,000 professionals in 47 countries globally, the New York-based consultancy had revenues of more than \$11 billion in the fiscal year that ended August 31, 2001. Obviously, Accenture can't afford glitches in its own operations—not if it is going to credibly advise its thousands of clients.

That meant the pressure was on for the firm to devise a superior solution when it relocated its Singapore headquarters to the 42-story Raffles City Tower. It wouldn't be enough for Accenture to install a functional system. Its clients would expect Accenture to find a great solution to a problem they themselves faced routinely. Would the consultancy

embrace global best practices and practice what it preached?

"We saw the move as an opportunity," says Ramdan Pawi, a manager in Accenture's Singapore office. "We had three options: retain our existing Private Branch Exchange, adopt a pure IP [Internet Protocol] telephony solution, or use a hybrid."

The Challenge

Accenture is very much a company on the cutting edge of change. Its 400 consultants in Singapore spend much of their time in the field, and the company wanted to implement a workplace communications system in the new office that would allow individuals the freedom to pick the best available desk each day—a system in which desks would have no owners. The company needed a phone system that would support this flexibility.

The consultancy also wanted to leverage its considerable store of data knowledge, built up over decades of advising clients. The goal was similar to what so many companies are looking for: a reliable, cost-effective communications system that successfully combines voice and data networks through a single pipe. Installing

With the follow-me feature, Accenture employees moving around the four floors of the new Singapore office would be constantly identified with sensors reading an employee badge. They would then automatically be able to receive important phone calls at the phone closest to their location. "As far as we know, we're the only company in the Cisco IP telephony world with such follow-me functionality," says Samuel Kheng, an Accenture regional network engineer.

Accenture has taken a giant leap toward achieving what most companies only dream of: convergence of voice and data over a simple, easy-to-maintain network. And it also has the luxury of maximum functionality, thanks to adopting a system that runs on an open standards platform.

separate backbones for each, which has been the typical solution for companies over the years, was needlessly complex and expensive to install and maintain.

To top it all off, the consultancy needed a system that would be intuitive to users. And the whole system had to be installed quickly. By the time Accenture reached a point where it could decide on its telephone system, the move, scheduled for late August, was just around the corner.

The Solution

Enter Cisco. Its IP telephony promised to achieve all of the company's goals and more. Based on open standards, the system would also permit flexible functionality that would be a noticeable improvement over Accenture's system in its old location. For example, the consultancy took advantage of the new system's open standards to develop a follow-me functionality that would be just the kind of service to impress existing and would-be customers.

With the follow-me feature, Accenture employees moving around the four floors of the new Singapore office would be constantly identified with sensors reading an employee badge. They would then automatically be able to receive important phone calls at the phone closest to their location. "As far as we know, we're the only company in the Cisco IP telephony world with such follow-me functionality," says Samuel Kheng, an Accenture regional network engineer.

Moreover, the system's extension mobility could readily support an open office system that allowed employees to essentially treat the nearest desk and phone as their own. According to Ramdan Pawi, his company can now easily move phones without having to worry about changing cabling paths: "Phone moves are zero-cost."

Best of all, the whole thing could be set up quickly—more quickly than a conventional network with even a fraction of the IP telephony system's functionality. Cisco, its partner NCR, and Accenture's own global network services team installed the system in time for the big move.

Ng Mi Chi, territory account manager for Cisco in Singapore, says the Accenture system was designed to be extremely friendly to users. "The learning curve is very short," she says. "Everyone was able to step in with minimal training and use it. It's a very intuitive system."

The Results

Accenture has taken a giant leap toward achieving what most companies only dream of: convergence of voice and data over a simple, easy-to-maintain network. And it also has the luxury of maximum functionality, thanks to adopting a system that runs on an open standards platform.

Accenture's Ramdan Pawi says Cisco IP telephony has brought numerous benefits to the consultancy. But he says the most



important may be its cost savings. After all, the consultancy often advises clients to choose effective and cost-efficient solutions to their problems. "There's an obvious cost benefit from providing a single cabling system that supports both voice and data—one less maintenance contract," he says.

Today Accenture touts the "cool technology" from Cisco on its Singapore Web site and notes that it has been able to get rid of its paging system entirely thanks to the follow-me functionality. The consultancy is understandably proud of the office environment it has created in Singapore, helping it achieve its goal of providing what it calls "the best place to work."

The Next Steps

Cisco believes it will be fascinating to watch as Accenture pushes the capabilities of IP telephony past new boundaries in the future. For example, Accenture may want to extend the system's capabilities to allow varied kinds of data exchange between employees. Unified messaging, which combines e-mail, voice mail, fax, and paging messages into a single application, is another likely goal.

Ng Mi Chi says it is the fact that Cisco's IP telephony runs on an open standards platform that truly makes functionality almost limitless—constrained mostly by the imagination of users. The use of open standards should also be great for companies in search of cost-effective solutions, because it encourages competition, and it opens the door to customized solutions.

Accenture Snapshot

- Management and technology services consultancy
- 75,000 employees in 110 offices spread over 47 countries around the world
- Spun off as a distinct and independent company from the Arthur Andersen accounting firm in 1989; rebranded as Accenture in 2001
- Singapore office is home base for more than 400 consultants



Corporate Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-4000
800 553-NETS (6387)
Fax: 408 526-4100

European Headquarters
Cisco Systems Europe s.a.r.l.
11 Rue Camille Desmoulins
92782 Issy-les-Moulineaux
Cedex 9
France
www-europe.cisco.com
Tel: 33 1 58 04 60 00
Fax: 33 1 58 04 61 00

Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-7660
Fax: 408 527-0883

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
Capital Tower
168 Robinson Road
#22-01 to #29-01
Singapore 068912
www.cisco.com
Tel: +65 6317-7777
Fax: +65 6317-7799

Cisco Systems has more than 200 offices in the following countries. Addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers are listed on the Cisco Web site at www.cisco.com/go/offices

Argentina • Australia • Austria • Belgium • Brazil • Bulgaria • Canada • Chile • China PRC • Colombia • Costa Rica • Croatia
Czech Republic • Denmark • Dubai, UAE • Finland • France • Germany • Greece • Hong Kong SAR • Hungary • India • Indonesia • Ireland
Israel • Italy • Japan • Korea • Luxembourg • Malaysia • Mexico • The Netherlands • New Zealand • Norway • Peru • Philippines • Poland
Portugal • Puerto Rico • Romania • Russia • Saudi Arabia • Scotland • Singapore • Slovakia • Slovenia • South Africa • Spain • Sweden
Switzerland • Taiwan • Thailand • Turkey • Ukraine • United Kingdom • United States • Venezuela • Vietnam • Zimbabwe

All contents are Copyright © 1992-2002, Cisco Systems, Inc. All rights reserved. CCIP, the Cisco Powered Network mark, the Cisco Systems Verified logo, Cisco Unity, Fast Step, Follow Me Browsing, FormShare, Internet Quotient, iQ Breakthrough, iQ Expertise, iQ FastTrack, the iQ logo, iQ Net Readiness Scorecard, Networking Academy, ScriptShare, SMARTnet, TransPath, and Voice LAN are trademarks of Cisco Systems, Inc.; Changing the Way We Work, Live, Play, and Learn, Discover All That's Possible, The Fastest Way to Increase Your Internet Quotient, and iQuick Study are service marks of Cisco Systems, Inc.; and Aironet, ASIST, BPX, Catalyst, CCDA, CCDP, CCIE, CCNA, CCNP, Cisco, the Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert logo, Cisco IOS, the Cisco IOS logo, Cisco Press, Cisco Systems, Cisco Systems Capital, the Cisco Systems logo, Empowering the Internet Generation, Enterprise/Solver, EtherChannel, EtherSwitch, GigaStack, IOS, IP/TV, LightStream, MGX, MICA, the Networkers logo, Network Registrar, Packet, PIX, Post-Routing, Pre-Routing, RateMUX, Registrar, SlideCast, StrataView Plus, Stratm, SwitchProbe, TeleRouter, and VCO are registered trademarks of Cisco Systems, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the U.S. and certain other countries.

All other trademarks mentioned in this document or Web site are the property of their respective owners. The use of the word partner does not imply a partnership relationship between Cisco and any other company. (0201R) ms6/02