

THE CASE FOR IP TELEPHONY

SINGAPORE'S LARGEST LAW FIRM INVESTS IN A CONVERGED NETWORK AND ADOPTS IP TELEPHONY FOR COST SAVINGS AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY.

Founded in 1902, Allen & Gledhill is today the largest law firm in Singapore with close to 200 lawyers. The Firm is consistently ranked at the top of the league tables for every major practice area including Corporate & Commercial, Corporate Real Estate, Financial Services, Intellectual Property & Technology and Litigation & Dispute

Resolution. Its success is largely due to its total commitment to providing clients with a premier legal service.

In early 2004, the Firm moved to a new office. It decided to take this opportunity to build an advanced converged network that will serve the Firm well for years to come.

THE CHALLENGE

ALLEN & GLEDHILL WAS MAINTAINING SEPARATE VOICE AND DATA NETWORKS AND FACING SCALABILITY ISSUES. THE MOVE TO A NEW OFFICE WAS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO UPGRADE ITS INFRASTRUCTURE TO ONE THAT COULD GROW WITH ITS BUSINESS.

Although steeped in tradition, the legal world is one that is changing rapidly and becoming more competitive with every year. A progressive organization, Allen & Gledhill believes that constant innovation – for example, by deploying advanced and appropriate technologies – is necessary to stay ahead of competition.

The Firm recruits lawyers who are bright, commercially-minded and forward thinking with a genuine interest in the business world and economic affairs. It believes that a pleasant and supportive working environment enables its lawyers to offer the best services to its clients. The move to a new office provided the opportunity to achieve this, and address certain infrastructural issues it was beginning to face at the old office.

In 2003, the Firm began to encounter scalability issues with its old network. Like most companies, Allen & Gledhill used to maintain two separate networks – a PABX system for voice and one for data traffic. However, these networks were not optimized and as a result, they didn't have the capacity to grow with its business which has to support a workforce of 200 lawyers and 350 support staff today.

As the Firm laid the groundwork for its move to One Marina Boulevard, a new smart building in the heart of Singapore's business district, it began to consider the possibility of basing its new infrastructure on a converged network and introducing IP telephony.

A converged network for both voice and data would deliver significant savings for Allen & Gledhill. Instead of maintaining two networks, the IT team would only have to maintain one. Part of the savings from this could be routed to building in the redundancy it needed for its business.

In addition, IP telephony was becoming much more main-stream and many of the earlier concerns about voice quality have been addressed by Quality of Service (QoS) improvements. With the move to the new office, it was an opportune time to introduce IP telephony for the Firm.



THIS IS THE POWER OF THE NETWORK. NOW.



THE SOLUTION

ALLEN & GLEDHILL INVESTS IN END-TO-END CISCO NETWORK AND CISCO IP TELEPHONY SOLUTION TO ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF CONVERGENCE.

Allen & Gledhill went through a three-month evaluation process during which they considered proposals from a number of vendors. In the end, the Firm decided to go with an end-to-end Cisco network and the Cisco IP Telephony solution proposed by Jardine OneSolution (JOS), a Cisco Premier Certified Partner which had worked with the Firm on several previous projects.

While the Firm had not used Cisco products, after visiting several reference sites, it was convinced that it was the way to go. The Cisco IP Telephony solution from JOS was very competitive, compared to other vendors and traditional PABX solutions. The main selling point was the long term cost savings it would enjoy with the Cisco IP Telephony solution by streamlining two networks into one.

By moving into the digital era with IP telephony, the Firm was simplifying network management considerably. Plus it would come with a host of other features – like unified messaging – which it could introduce in the future.

Kent Lee, General Manager of JOS added, “Having worked closely with Allen & Gledhill on other projects before – from setting up their office and network infrastructure to the supply of PCs and notebooks – we have a good understanding of the Firm’s major business concerns. This enabled us to put together a winning proposal for an IP telephony solution which meets their needs.

“We were able to build a convincing business case for IP telephony, proving to them that over a long term period, the Firm will, in fact, reduce its operating costs with the Cisco IP Telephony Solution.”

The new network comprises Cisco Catalyst 4500 Series Switches, Cisco PIX Firewalls, Cisco VPN, Cisco CallManager Version 3.3, Cisco Unity Server and 550 units of Cisco IP Phones. The complete solution was implemented in less than three months by JOS, and was ready in time for the Firm’s move to its new premises in April 2004.

Today, Allen & Gledhill has a much better and more complete network. With this Cisco network, it can comfortably expect to support its needs for the next five years. At the same time, the Firm has built in a 100 percent redundancy with its own backup power supply, as well as links to the building’s own power source.

JOS is one of Asia’s leading providers of integrated IT services and solutions. It has been a force in the IT industry for more than 50 years and today delivers a rich blend of IT offerings ranging from Technical Support and Services and System Integration to Outsourcing and Managed Services. JOS employs more than 2,000 staff in eight offices in Hong Kong, China, Singapore and Malaysia.

THE MAIN SELLING POINT WAS THE LONG TERM COST SAVINGS IT WOULD ENJOY WITH THE CISCO IP TELEPHONY SOLUTION BY STREAMLINING TWO NETWORKS INTO ONE.

In an industry where the confidentiality of the lawyer-client relationship is sacrosanct, security was a major issue for the Firm. JOS helped Allen & Gledhill design its network, taking into consideration data security to ensure that outsiders would not be able to tap into its data.



THE RESULTS

FIRM ENJOYS COST SAVINGS, SIMPLIFIED NETWORK MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVED VOICE QUALITY WITH CISCO IP TELEPHONY SOLUTION.

All around the world, organizations have realized real returns on investment (ROI) as a result of Cisco IP Telephony solutions. Enterprises save money from international calls, reduced equipment, network management and maintenance costs, and optimizing the use of limited staff resources. For example, Cisco Systems itself saved US\$1.5 million on wiring costs across six new facilities because the phone and PC share the same Ethernet port at each desktop.

THE SIMPLICITY AND EASE OF MANAGEMENT OF THE NEW NETWORK AT ALLEN & GLEDHILL IS A SIGNIFICANT BENEFIT. NOW THE IN-HOUSE IT TEAM CAN CONFIGURE THE PHONES EASILY WITH SOME BASIC KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER FROM JOS AND CISCO.

The simplicity and ease of management of the new network at Allen & Gledhill is a significant benefit to the 10-person in-house IT team, which has to support a workforce of 550. For confidentiality reasons, the Firm handles its own application and helpdesk support internally. The Cisco IP Telephony solution has made the IT team's job that much easier. Instead of managing over 1,000 points – 550 voice points and 550 data points, it now has to manage half that number. This enables the Firm to provide a backup point for each user and implement a fully redundant network hence reducing both the voice and data communication to practically zero.

Whenever the Firm needed anything changed, it used to have to get the vendors involved which cost money and took time to arrange. Now the in-house IT team can configure the phones easily with some basic knowledge transfer from JOS and

Cisco. When any of its staff need to change locations, all they have to do is take their Cisco IP phone with them, plug it in and log on. This is much more convenient for the users and causes less of a drain on limited IT resources.

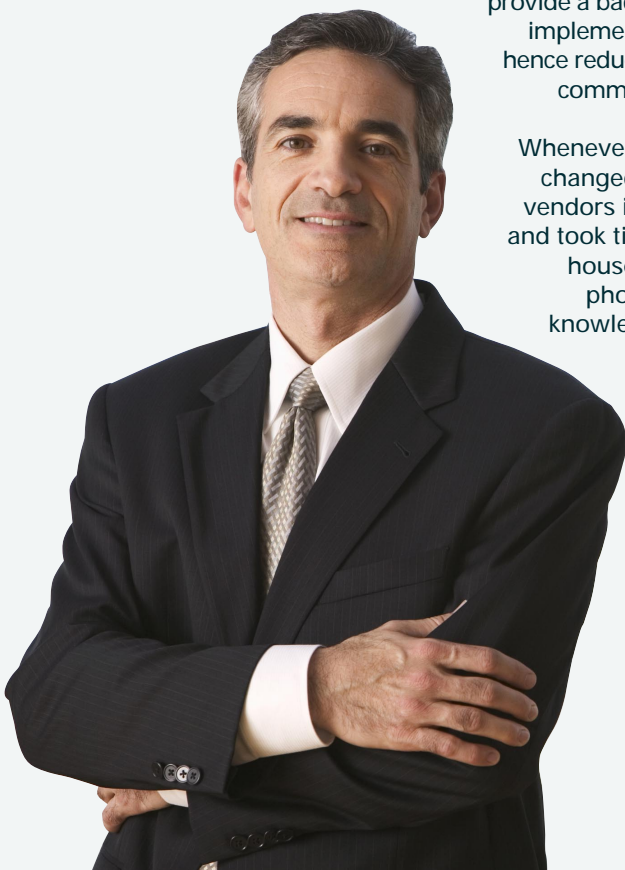
Business continuity is a major concern for Allen & Gledhill, in view of the increase in global terrorism and other threats. The Firm is putting in place a disaster recovery plan with the preparation of a backup site to ensure that business can continue even in the event of a disaster.

The Firm's converged network also provides the necessary platform to make unified messaging a reality. A study done by The Radicati Group, Inc found that unified messaging systems generate 25 to 40 minutes of additional productivity per employee per day and can reduce IT support and administrative costs up to 70 percent.

The transition from PABX to IP telephony for Allen & Gledhill staff has been seamless. Prior to implementation, a major concern was the quality of voice traffic. The Firm used to have problems with clarity during conference calls on its old PABX system. The voice quality on the Cisco IP Phones has been stable. With proper QoS settings in place, both voice and data traffic are getting through without a hitch.

Unified messaging, which is a feature of the Cisco IP Telephony solution, can be turned on to enable staff to work effectively even from home. This is something that would not have been possible if the Firm was still maintaining separate PABX and data networks.

Moving forward, the Firm will be introducing the unified messaging features once they have completed the upgrade to Microsoft Exchange 2000.



THE PARTNERSHIP

CISCO AND JOS' LACK OF RED TAPE AND COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPRESSES ALLEN & GLEDHILL.

"JOS has a strong track record of successfully implementing Cisco IP Telephony at other companies, which provided good reference sites for the Firm to consult with," said Mr Lee. "In addition, we have a team of consultants and engineers who are certified and well-versed in Cisco products, having undergone extensive training. And of course, our strong working ties with Cisco based on joint collaboration and many implementations ensure a united and committed team."

While Allen & Gledhill is new to Cisco, they have not been disappointed so far. It has been pleased with the partnership with Cisco and JOS. Throughout this major implementation, it found that both companies were capable of operating with very little red tape and very responsive to its requests.

When a few teething problems were encountered during the first week of operations, Cisco and JOS demonstrated their willingness to work long hours – through nights and weekends – to resolve them as quickly as possible.

The Firm's employees have found the Cisco products easy to use. Apart from a short introductory training course from JOS at the start, they have not had to invest in additional training to maintain and manage the network.

THROUGHOUT THIS MAJOR IMPLEMENTATION, IT FOUND THAT BOTH CISCO AND JOS WERE CAPABLE OF OPERATING WITH VERY LITTLE RED TAPE AND VERY RESPONSIVE TO ITS REQUESTS.



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