

Small Italian IT services company provides customers with enterprise-class data center applications



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CUSTOMER NAME · Italdata
LOCATION · Avellino, Italy
INDUSTRY · IT
COMPANY SIZE · 101 employees
BUSINESS CHALLENGE · Italdata customers needed support to enter new markets and launch new products such as mobile phone services · Need to deliver an enterprise data center solution with small business resources
NETWORK SOLUTION · Cisco Data Center 3.0 strategy · Cisco Storage Area Network · Cisco Secure Data Center
BUSINESS VALUE · Reduces time-to-market for developing new services · Helps businesses deploy customer facing products and marketing promotions in days · Helps to increase competitive advantage for entering the saturated mobile phone market · Provides a low-cost, enterprise class data center solution for small and medium sized businesses · Maximizes use of Data Center resources

Italdata, a small IT services company in Italy, is using a Cisco Data Center networking solution to help one of the country's leading supermarket chains launch a new, low-cost service into the highly competitive mobile phone market.

Business Challenge

Italdata S.p.A., a wholly owned subsidiary of Siemens, is an IT company providing services such as IT system & software development, and implementation, IT support and managed Data Center services to Siemens and other organizations. The company operates across several sectors including government, retail, utilities, industry and telecommunications.

One of Italdata's customers is Conad, one of the largest supermarket chains in Italy. Supermarkets in Italy and around Europe have started to offer customers low-cost, own-brand mobile phone services which customers can buy off the shelf, much like a weekly grocery item. Although branded, this kind of service uses the network of a main service operator such as Vodafone.

Conad launched a low-cost mobile service for its customers and has outsourced Data Center requirements to Italdata. Conad is using a customer relationship management (CRM) system developed by Italdata and hosted in Italdata's Data Center in Avellino, in Southern Italy. This CRM system supports around one million customer records – around 15TB of data. To manage this application for Conad Italdata needed a reliable, easy-to-use and scalable data storage platform.

Network Solution

To help support Conad's mobile phone services, Italdata has used Cisco's Data Center 3.0 – an approach to using the network to transform Data Center services and operations – to develop a Cisco Storage Area Network (SAN) in its Data Center. The Cisco solution comprises Cisco fiber channel switching technology which connects application and storage hardware to create the Cisco SAN. Because Conad needs to have a link between its CRM system and Vodafone's Data Center in



Vienna, Italdata is using Cisco Network Security technology to protect data transactions between the two Data Centers and within the data center itself. Cisco Network Security technology gives Italdata an 'out of the box' portfolio of services such as firewalls, intrusion prevention (IPS) and content security which integrate to produce a highly effective security solution.

In addition, Italdata also uses a Cisco Wide Area Network (WAN) connecting its Avellino head office with other offices in Rome and Milan and for connection to Siemens' offices. Cisco Local Area Networks are used at each location.

Italdata decided to base its Data Center strategy on Cisco, because of the functionality and features of Cisco SAN technology and its scalability compared to other vendors. With its Virtual SAN (VSAN) capability which expands SAN capacity quickly and securely without the need for extra hardware, Italdata will be able to use the Cisco technology to respond to demand from Conad and other customers for new services.

Another important feature of the Cisco SAN technology is support for the Linux environment and in particular its ability to provide SAN fencing. If a server in a Linux cluster has a problem, the Cisco technology is able to recognize the problem and 'fence off' the problematic server without disrupting the application or losing data integrity.

Mario Di Sarno, IT manager at Italdata, says, "One of the key advantages of using Cisco is it offers the ideal solution for a smaller business like Italdata. The Cisco Data Center enables us to deploy powerful Data Center solutions quickly and at low cost – which we couldn't do before. Cisco SAN products, for example, bring Cisco Intelligent Storage Networking to small- and medium-scale SANs and data center edge applications and deliver the ideal balance between cost and performance with enterprise-class features."

Business Results

The Cisco Data Center will allow Italdata to provide a very scalable and flexible service to their retail customer Conad. The new, low-cost mobile phone service that Conad is offering to its customers needs be able to respond to the market and customer demand very quickly.

For example, Conad may want to launch a one-week, in-store promotion linked to an offer for free minutes for mobile phone customers. The Cisco SAN means that Italdata can set up and provision within a day the data storage resources Conad needs to launch this kind of promotion.

“In the retail sector and especially for supermarkets introducing new products to customers, being able to launch a new service or promote a special offer to customers very quickly is vital. A retailer like Conad only has days to keep ahead of its competitors. So it's critical that we can respond equally quickly to Conad by having the technology in place to support fast application development and delivery. This is why the Cisco Data Center solution is so important. It allows us to meet demand from customers quickly but also in a cost effective way.”

Mario Di Sarno, IT Manager, Italdata

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PRODUCT LIST
<p>Routing and Switching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cisco Catalyst 2960 Series Switches
<p>SAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cisco MDS 9100 Series Multilayer Fabric Switches
<p>Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cisco ASA 5500 Series Adaptive Security Appliances

equally quickly to Conad by having the technology in place to support fast application development and delivery. This is why the Cisco Data Center solution is so important. It allows us to meet demand from customers quickly but also in a cost effective way," says Di Sarno.

The Cisco SAN technology enables Italdata to virtualize data storage across physical devices so that existing resources are maximized and used more effectively. This also means that setting up new applications can be done much faster because, for example, storage

needed to support the application no longer relies on finding or buying additional storage devices.

Also as demand for more storage increase – as more customers buy Conad's mobile phone service – Italdata can quickly and easily expand its data storage capacity.

As well as enabling Italdata to support its customers more effectively, the Cisco Data Center solution also benefits Italdata. Virtualizing storage resources means that Italdata can use its storage resources more cost effectively and data center operations and functions like maintenance, back up and security are easier to manage.

Italdata is planning to use the Cisco SAN and the VSAN capabilities in particular, to support other customers as well as additional services for Conad as demand arises. Cisco VSANs will enable Italdata to offer its customers highly secure and highly available applications quickly without needing a lot of additional investment.



Americas 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: 408 527-0883

Asia Pacific Headquarters
 Cisco Systems, Inc.
 168 Robinson Road
 #28-01 Capital Tower
 Singapore 068912
www.cisco.com
 Tel: +65 6317 7777
 Fax: +65 6317 7799

Europe Headquarters
 Cisco Systems International BV
 Haarlerbergpark
 Haarlerbergweg 13-19
 1101 CH Amsterdam
 The Netherlands
www-europe.cisco.com
 Tel: +31 0 800 020 0791
 Fax: +31 0 20 357 1100

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