

# Data Center Interconnection for Optimum Service

Customer Case Study



## FloraHolland safeguards world famous flower auctions and cuts costs by 20 percent with Cisco Nexus-enabled innovations

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Customer Name:** FloraHolland

**Industry:** Agriculture

**Location:** Netherlands

**Number of Employees:** 4000

#### Challenge

- Ensure uninterrupted sales processes for members
- Improve IT management and cost efficiency

#### Solution

- Cisco Nexus platform, enabled with FabricPath and Overlay Transport Virtualization technologies for optimal data center performance

#### Results

- Helps achieve 100 percent uptime target
- Cuts overall data center maintenance costs by 20 percent
- Requires less cabling and time to connect blade enclosures

#### Challenge

FloraHolland is a cooperative of 5000 horticultural growers, 600 of which are based outside the Netherlands, founded around the region's famous tulip trade. It helps members sell flowers through a series of daily auctions. Those auctions take place online and across five physical sites every working weekday morning.

Lots are auctioned via 38 clocks, which count down the value of the lot until a bidder steps in, at which point the sale closes. Behind the scenes, a robust IT infrastructure is essential to the smooth running of the auction process. Buyers usually have to make expensive advance provisions for transporting flowers each day, so any network outage during an auction can not only lose sales, but also generate losses right through the flower industry supply chain.

Previously FloraHolland operated 14 server rooms, fitted with Cisco Catalyst® 3750 and 6500 Series Switches. This arrangement worked well enough, but the switches had to be taken offline for maintenance, so at times the servers had no connection to the network. As part of a project to consolidate servers across two new data centers, the organization reviewed its switching infrastructure to see if it could increase resilience while reducing costs.

#### Solution

A core of Cisco Nexus® 7004 Series Switches was chosen to form two virtual data centers. Each data center runs Cisco® FabricPath, and the two are connected using Overlay Transport Virtualization (OTV) as a data center interconnect technology. These innovations in data center interconnection offer loop-free LAN extension, stretching across the data center WAN, coupled with routing principles that allow Layer 2 scaling and stability in a way that was not possible before.

“Using combined Cisco OTV and FabricPath ensures high performance with nonstop access to critical business applications and information,” says Wil Schenkeveld, infrastructure architect at FloraHolland.



**“Using combined Cisco OTV and FabricPath ensures high performance with nonstop access to critical business applications and information.”**

Wil Schenkeveld  
Infrastructure Architect  
FloraHolland



As well as introducing new technologies and 10Gbps performance, FloraHolland has taken the opportunity to greatly simplify management. End-of-row switching is provided by Cisco Nexus 6001 Series Switches and top-of-rack connectivity by Cisco Nexus 2248TP-E Gigabit Ethernet Fabric Extenders. Catalyst 3750 Series Switches have been retained for out-of-band management, allowing system administrators to remotely monitor and manage equipment, regardless of whether the device is powered on.

### Results

The Nexus-enabled technologies are helping FloraHolland achieve its target of 100 percent auction systems uptime. OTV and FabricPath have helped remove Spanning Tree Protocol, a previous cause of network outages that was considered a risk in interconnecting the two data centers, which are 70 kilometers (44 miles) apart.

IT application performance and user experience have been further improved by new Nexus features, such as In-Service Software Upgrade, allowing switches to be updated while remaining fully operational, so they never need to be taken out of service.

“The data center project has helped reduce overall IT maintenance costs by an estimated 20 percent,” Schenkeveld says. “We’re saving on cabling because of top-of-rack and end-of-row concepts which, combined with 10 Gigabit Ethernet, also makes it much easier to connect blade enclosures.”



### For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco architectures and solutions featured in this case study, go to: [www.cisco.com/go/nexus](http://www.cisco.com/go/nexus)

### Product List

#### Routing and Switching

- Cisco Nexus 6000 and 7000 Series Switches
- Cisco Nexus 2248TP-E GE Fabric Extenders
- Cisco Catalyst 3750 and 6500 Series Switches



**Americas Headquarters**  
Cisco Systems, Inc.  
San Jose, CA

**Asia Pacific Headquarters**  
Cisco Systems (USA) Pte. Ltd.  
Singapore

**Europe Headquarters**  
Cisco Systems International BV Amsterdam,  
The Netherlands

Cisco has more than 200 offices worldwide. Addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers are listed on the Cisco Website at [www.cisco.com/go/offices](http://www.cisco.com/go/offices).

Cisco and the Cisco logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Cisco and/or its affiliates in the U.S. and other countries. To view a list of Cisco trademarks, go to this URL: [www.cisco.com/go/trademarks](http://www.cisco.com/go/trademarks). Third party trademarks mentioned 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. (1110R)