

“Virtual Experts” Smooth Transition for Procter & Gamble Expats: Cisco TelePresence Kiosks Enable Face-to-Face Problem-Solving

Executive Summary

CUSTOMER

Procter & Gamble

INDUSTRY

Retail/CPG

CHALLENGE

Improve employee services for expatriate executives during regional headquarters move

SOLUTION

Replace phone and Internet help services with Cisco® TelePresence™ kiosks, allowing face-to-face meetings between employees in Panama and a help center in Costa Rica

RESULTS

- Faster resolution of employee payroll and benefits problems
- Greatly improved employee satisfaction, with 100 percent of employees reporting they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the service
- 65 percent of all employee-initiated compensation questions were answered using the Virtual Experts service
- 90 percent of employees would like to see this service continue and believe access to an expert is key to resolving their issues

Background

Procter & Gamble (P&G) is the largest consumer packaged goods company in the world, with operations in about 80 countries and 135,000 employees worldwide. It has operated in Latin America since 1948, when it opened a subsidiary in Mexico. Today, it has employees in 14 Latin American countries, spread across 19 manufacturing sites, 12 distribution centers, and one service center.

In late 2007, the company decided to relocate its regional headquarters to Panama from Venezuela and Chile, a move that included transfers of more than 200 employees and executives in 2008 and 2009. According to P&G, the choice was driven by Panama’s “proximity to key countries, being a strategic point of connectivity, and the fastest-growing economy in Central America.”

While the first two years in Panama have been successful beyond P&G management’s expectations, the international relocation of so many workers created some daunting challenges for its Employee Services department.

At the time those challenges were emerging, the [Cisco® Internet Business Solutions Group \(IBSG\)](#) and P&G were in the early stages of a new strategy to work hand-in-hand to identify P&G’s “wicked problems”—the vexing challenges that directly affect business performance—and tackle them within 90 days. P&G prides itself on its employee support services, so it engaged with Cisco IBSG to help improve the process.

Challenges

Employees’ main problems involved expatriate compensation and the logistics of moving. In the first few pay cycles after the move, employees had many questions. Some needed six or more interactions with a call center in Costa Rica to solve their problems. Employees in Panama were spending too much time trying to obtain support.

Matt Crabtree, director of Global Business Services for P&G, said outsourced services sometimes don’t provide the “high-touch and personal need that an employee has, particularly when that need is

“By transforming the way we do business, in partnership with Cisco IBSG, we can quickly move a pilot (in this case, within 60 days), make a big transformation in the space, and by [offering] that service in a new way, [we can] make a real step change in our business results.”

Matt Crabtree, Director
Global Business Services
Procter & Gamble

very personal or very complex. Just calling the call center in Costa Rica or going online for guided help doesn't always do the trick, and it didn't in this case,” he said.

Solutions

Cisco IBSG consultants suggested setting up Cisco TelePresence kiosks in Panama and Costa Rica so employees could meet face-to-face with a representative in the help center, either by appointment or on a walk-in basis.

Cisco TelePresence uses high-definition video and audio to create the experience of face-to-face meetings. People appear in life size around a virtual conference table, creating a unique experience where participants feel as though they're sitting in the same room.

The Cisco IBSG team built a proof-of-concept at P&G's Cincinnati, Ohio headquarters within two days, and developed the live system, called “Virtual Experts,” within 60 days.

Results

P&G's Employee Services department reported dramatic improvements immediately after the program launched in June 2009.

A customer satisfaction survey of employees found that by July 2009:

- 65 percent of all employee-initiated compensation questions were answered using the Virtual Experts service
- 100 percent of employees reported that they were satisfied with the service, with 90 percent of those employees “very satisfied”
- 90 percent of employees would like to see this service continue and believe access to an expert is key to resolving their issues

“The results have been outstanding,” Crabtree said. “The turnaround time on issues has been tremendous. The feeling of confidence instilled in the expatriate has skyrocketed, knowing that there's a face, and a name, and someone committed to get back to them....Satisfaction has gone from the 60s to the high 90s almost overnight with this new innovation.”

More Information

Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG), the company's global consultancy, helps CXOs from the world's largest public and private organizations solve critical business challenges. By connecting strategy, process, and technology, Cisco IBSG industry experts enable customers to turn visionary ideas into value.

For further information about IBSG, visit <http://www.cisco.com/go/ibsg>



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