Executive Summary

Customer Name
L.W. Cretschmar Española, S.A.

Industry
Transport and logistics

Location
7 locations across Spain

Number of Employees
120

Challenge
- Improve communications throughout the supply chain
- Enhance efficiency and customer service
- Support future growth and flexibility

Results
- Reduced operational costs
- More efficient communications and collaboration between sites
- Established foundations for future growth and new services

Solution
- A unified voice and data network covering all sites
- Unified Communications
- Enhanced security with antivirus and spam filters

Communications revitalized for logistics company branches

Unified Communications provide added control, security and flexibility for logistics company in Spain

Challenge

Cretschmar is a German transport and logistics company with sites across Europe. The Spanish arm has been particularly successful, growing to comprise a national head office and six branches and depots nationwide.

Each of Cretschmar's sites had a separate telephone system, and individual service and maintenance contracts with local companies. As a result, problem solving from head office was difficult. Each office had its own local area network using equipment from different manufacturers. This posed a big challenge for the Madrid-based IT team who had to travel around the country to solve problems.

Continuing growth led to the decision to build a new head office outside Madrid. In preparation for this, Cretschmar wanted to implement new communications services and streamline its existing processes so that they would be fully operational when the move took place.

Cretschmar wanted a reliable and scalable solution from a single supplier, which would grow with the company and support future services. For this, it turned to Impala Network Solutions, a Cisco Silver Partner and Premier Partner of the Year (2007) in Spain. Impala designed voice and data networks at the sites using Cisco technology to connect the branches via a Spanish service provider.

Results

With the new combined voice and data solution, the various Spanish sites are able to communicate better. As a result, there is greater efficiency of vehicles, drivers, and loads, and a decrease in the number of incidents with items mislaid or wrongly delivered, that meant wasted time. This, in turn, equates to better customer service.

IP Telephony avoids public network tolls, reducing costs and allowing Cretschmar's employees to keep in better touch with each other and their customers, with substantial benefits. Daniel Martinez, Cretschmar's Head of IT, explains: "We have been able to improve our time management and call-handling, giving better overall customer service."

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With one supplier across all services and sites, the new solution is cheaper and easier to manage. The IT department is more productive and cost-effective because they can administrate users and fix problems faster and without traveling. Martinez describes the difference the solution has made: "Rather than spending time fixing faults, we are now developing new services to benefit the company."

The platform allows Cretschmar to respond with more agility to market changes and issues, making it more competitive.

An added benefit of selecting a Cisco solution was the opportunity to take advantage of Cisco Capital Easy Renting. This offers finance with zero percent interest and technology refresh options that can reduce total cost of ownership.

Solution

Impala designed and built a unified voice and data network, which runs as a secure Virtual Private Network (VPN).

A Local Area Network (LAN) is provided at each office using Cisco® Catalyst 3560 switches. A Cisco router at each site provides connections, via a Spanish service provider, to the Wide Area Network (WAN) at much higher speeds than the previous service. This makes it much quicker and easier to exchange files and information. The routers are modular, making them very cost and power-efficient, as the customer can add new services like firewalls, wireless, and IP Telephony when it needs them.

IP Telephony services are provided to every office by a Cisco Unified Communications Manager call processing system in Madrid. Centralizing service in this way makes it much easier for the head office-based IT team to support each site. The cost of mobile services has also been reduced by routing calls to mobile phones over the network.

In the past, each office had its own connection to the Internet, but the new solution benefits from centralized Internet access from the head office. This is more cost effective and also makes it easier to provide security. The entire network benefits from end-to-end security with the Cisco Self Defending Network. Cretschmar has a Cisco ASA 5500 Series Adaptive Security Appliance. This is a modular platform that provides the next generation of security and VPN services, including anti-virus protection.

Centralizing services and devices combined with network management software enables the IT team to deliver a better service. "We are able to constantly measure the performance of the network. With this data we can guarantee optimal functioning of the IP network at all times," says Martinez.

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Next Steps

With the move to its new Madrid facilities, Cretschmar expects to further improve customer services. The new network will enable it to achieve better inventory management through RFID (Radio Frequency Identity Device) tag technology and 24/7 connections to drivers and warehouse keepers. This will give the company better product visibility, greatly reducing the time to delivery and risk of items being mislaid.

Product List

- Cisco Catalyst 3560 Series PoE Switches
- Cisco Integrated Services Routers 2800 Series (models 2821, 2811 and 2801)
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Adaptive Security Appliance 5510
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 7900 Series (models 7941, 7920, 7914 and 7911)

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