

WHITEPAPER

IP Contact Center: Realize the Full Business Potential of IP Contact Centers

The joint solution from Cisco® and IBM® provides people, processes, and technology needed to maximize the return on investment from IP contact centers.

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Executive Summary

IP contact centers provide compelling benefits compared to traditional contact centers, including increased operational efficiency, lower total cost of ownership, an improved customer experience, enhanced revenue from up-selling and cross-selling, increased agent satisfaction, and ease of growth. The joint IP contact center solution from Cisco and IBM simplifies the transition to an IP contact center by providing all necessary hardware, software, design, and deployment services, including business-process transformation and integration with customer databases.

Business Advantages of IP Contact Centers

IP contact centers provide valuable capabilities not available from traditional time-division multiplexing (TDM) contact centers.

Increased Operational Efficiency

With an IP-based contact center solution, organizations can build a virtual contact center including agents in any global location, as well as home-based agents. Operational efficiency improves when the contact center can intelligently route calls to any agent, in any global location, based on availability, workload, and skills. Call-handling time decreases when agents can receive screen pops with customer history from integrated customer relationship management (CRM) systems. And less time is needed to escalate calls when agents can view each other's "presence" information to immediately identify resources with the needed expertise, anywhere in the enterprise, who are currently available.

Lower Total Cost of Ownership

Factors contributing to lower total cost of ownership from IP contact centers include:

- Lower local and long-distance charges because transferred calls travel over the IP network instead of the public switched telephone network (PSTN)
- Reduced capital expense, from unifying previously separate voice and data networks and using standards-based servers instead of private branch exchange (PBX) systems
- Lower operational costs, including administration, facilities, and telephone-extension moves, adds, and changes

Improved Customer Experience

Customers can interact with IP contact centers using the most convenient channel: voice, e-mail, video, messaging, chat, or automatic callback when an agent is free. They receive faster, better service because their calls can be automatically routed to a knowledgeable agent based on their phone number or information they supply using the keypad or interactive voice response (IVR) system. When agents transfer a call, the customer information can be transferred at the same time, reducing annoying repeated requests for the same information. Organizations that integrate the contact center solution with their CRM software can segment their customer base to provide premium service to high-value customers—for example, by routing them to a special contact center or moving them to the front of the queue. Finally, IP contact centers can offer convenient, efficient self-service capabilities using voice recognition and text-to-speech translation, which reduce costs and can increase customer satisfaction.

Revenue Enhancement

When the IP contact center is integrated with CRM databases, agents can view a complete customer history when they receive the call. This helps them anticipate customers' needs and up-sell and cross-sell more effectively.

Better Agent Retention and Productivity

In IP-based contact centers, supervisors can centrally monitor and record agents' interactions with callers to identify appropriate training opportunities. Timely training and coaching can help improve agent performance, which has been shown to increase agent retention. Job satisfaction also improves when agents can be offered more job variety, such as working with e-mail and chat channels, and have the opportunity to work from home.

Flexible Growth and Simplified Maintenance

Adding more capacity to TDM-based contact centers usually requires purchasing a larger PBX system, a large capital outlay. In IP contact centers, in contrast, the organization can increase capacity in small increments as it adds new contact center sites and home-based agents. Agents can keep their phone numbers when they change locations, making it easier for their customers and other employees to reach them.

What to Look for in an IP Contact Center Solution

The return on investment (ROI) an organization experiences from its IP contact center can vary widely, based on the technology, design, systems integration, and adoption of business practices that fully take advantage of the new capabilities. Following are attributes of effective IP contact center deployments:

- *Comprehensive professional services.* Successful contact centers are built not only with technology, but also on effective processes and skilled people. Business-process reengineering, design, and implementation services help reduce risk and maximize ROI.
- *Scalability and use of open standards.* Support for open standards enables rapid integration of the contact center with other unified communications, security, and business services. Commonly used standards include Session Initiation Protocol (SIP), Voice Extensible Markup Language (VoiceXML), call-control XML, Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) and other Web Services, and Java 2 Enterprise Edition (J2EE).
- *Easy integration with CRM systems.* Integrating the contact center with customer databases enables customer segmentation, which facilitates up-selling, cross-selling, and providing premium treatment for high-value customers. With the proper contact center design, agents can view a comprehensive customer history spanning all interactions on all channels: voice, IVR, chat, and others.

- *Load balancing.* Customer service improves and queues are shorter when the infrastructure supports load balancing across all contact center locations.
- *Centralized administration and Web-based call management.* A virtual contact center with regional or global locations is most effective if it can be managed as a single entity. For example, managers like the ability to view metrics not only for individual locations, but also for the operation as a whole—and from any Web browser.
- *Presence technology.* Agents can escalate calls more quickly—and increase first-call resolution rates—when they can see which resources are currently available, within the virtual contact center or elsewhere in the company.
- *Single point of contact for all maintenance and support.* Issue resolution is simpler when a single vendor can address issues pertaining to call center equipment, software, systems integration, application development, and business processes.

Solution: Joint IP Contact Center Solution from Cisco and IBM

Cisco and IBM Global Services provide a comprehensive IP contact center solution, including all hardware, software, and professional services needed to help maximize ROI.

Cisco Unified Contact Center

Cisco Unified Contact Center provides an open, strategic platform to transform the call center to the next level of customer care: a customer interaction network. Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise (server based) and Cisco Unified Contact Center Express (router based) deliver intelligent contact routing, call treatment, network-to-desktop computer telephony integration, and multichannel contact management over an IP infrastructure. Contact centers that deploy the solution can improve the customer experience and maximize revenues by:

- Segmenting customers to recommend good up-selling and cross-selling opportunities and provide premium service for customers with high lifetime values
- Delivering each contact to the most appropriate resource anywhere in the enterprise, based on real-time conditions, such as agent skills, availability, and queue lengths
- Providing agents with comprehensive customer profiles based on the caller's number, for example
- Integrating inbound and outbound voice applications with Internet applications such as real-time chat, Web collaboration, and e-mail
- Extending the workforce with agents who work in any location, including at home, creating a virtual contact center

Cisco Unified Contact Center complements IBM technology, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Synergies from Cisco and IBM Technologies

Cisco and IBM Technology Pairing	Business Benefit
Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal is preintegrated with IBM WebSphere® Voice Server	Provides voice recognition in all contact center locations. The convenient natural-language interface encourages more customers to use self-service channels, which reduces costs, increases customer satisfaction, and frees up agents to handle exceptions or focus on high-value customers.
Cisco Unified Presence server integrates with IBM Lotus® Sametime®	Gives callers the option to click to dial during instant messaging. Presence information enables agents, or even customers, to identify the experts who are available to take the call and then immediately connect with them for faster problem resolution and increased customer satisfaction (Figure 1)
Cisco and IBM contact center solutions integrate out of the box with CRM platforms from Oracle, SAP, and other vendors	Reduces costs and risk. The Cisco and IBM joint solution complements rather than competes with CRM solutions, enabling agents to view complete customer information and provide better, faster service.
Cisco Unified Contact Center integrates with the IBM WebSphere architecture	WebSphere load-balancing techniques provide high availability, and use of WebSphere Web-based customer data access helps to ensure that the customer has a consistent experience regardless of the contact channel.

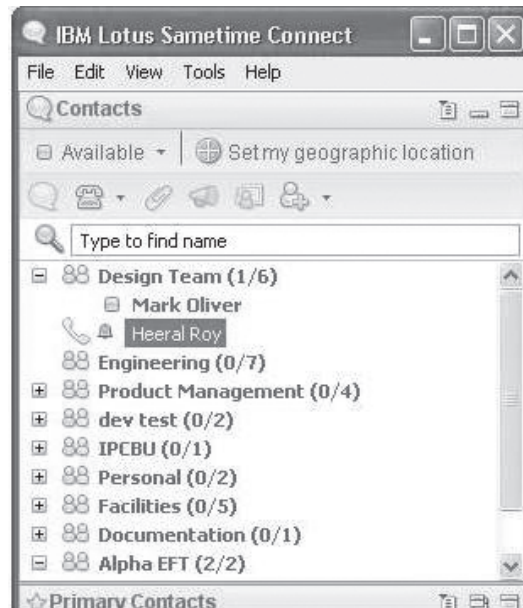


Figure 1. Presence information enables fast identification of available resources anywhere in the enterprise

Cisco Unified Contact Center provides a strong platform for today's customer interaction networks:

- Highly scalable and resilient design
- Open platform architecture, facilitating integration with CRM systems that help to enable caller segmentation
- Ability to work with an existing contact center infrastructure, including IVR and automated call distribution (ACD) systems from other vendors
- Immediate centralized queuing for existing distributed call centers
- Inclusion of Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal, which maximizes operational efficiency and reduces costs by queuing incoming calls at the edge of the network

Cisco Unified Contact Center: Powerful Customer Value Proposition

A study by Sage Research¹ showed that among companies using Cisco Unified Contact Center solutions:

- 88 percent reported generating an additional US\$3000 or more per month, per sales agent
- More than 50 percent reported agents handled an average of 30 or more additional calls per day
- 67 percent reported being able to assist an additional 10 or more customers per day
- 91 percent reported completion of an additional 10 or more outbound calls per day, per agent

IBM Services

IBM is a leading global contact center consulting services organization. IDC has named IBM Global Services as the top marketplace share leader in network consulting and integration services revenue each year since 1996.² IBM has extensive experience deploying large-scale IP telephony solutions in contact centers and providing IP contact center technical support, help desk, business transformation outsourcing, and business process outsourcing services.

Organizations can reduce risk by using IBM's world-class customer labs to provide proof of concept and solution assurance against rigid performance criteria in an environment that simulates the customer's own contact center conditions.

IBM Technology

IBM hardware and software enhance the Cisco Unified Contact Center solution:

- IBM servers are used for applications such as Cisco Unified Communications Manager and Cisco Voice Portal.
- IBM software facilitates management, enhances performance, and simplifies integration with enterprise infrastructure:
 - Tivoli® software supports systems management, including security, storage, monitoring, and configuration.
 - WebSphere Application Server, Voice Server, Process Server, and related middleware enable application deployment, voice recognition, and connectivity to enterprise applications such as customer relationship management.
 - Lotus Sametime, including instant messaging and Web conferencing, provides enhanced agent capabilities that facilitate customer interactions and call transfers.
 - Standards-based interfaces, including XML and SIP, enable Cisco Unified IP phones to be used for applications such as time clock, news and message delivery, schedule lookup, and others.

1. *Productivity and the IPC Business Case—Analysis of Large Enterprises*. April 2005. Sage Research, Inc.

2. *Worldwide and U.S. Network Consulting and Integration Services 2004 Vendor Shares: Top 10 Market Share Leaders*. March 2006, IDC #34663.

Customer Examples

The joint contact center solution from Cisco and IBM can be part of a comprehensive solution to meet business challenges in industries as diverse as financial services, healthcare, retail, and government.

Case Study: Retail Mediamarket

Business Challenge: Part of the Metro AG Group, Mediamarket is the European market leader in consumer electronics retailing, with more than 80 stores and 6,000 employees. As part of its multi-channel strategy, the company wanted to unify its store, call center, and e-commerce operations to create a consolidated service platform and real-time view across the business.

Solution: Mediamarket is building a new retail network, based on Cisco Unified Communications, which will eventually connect every store in Italy. The company is working with IBM Global Services and Cisco Customer Advocacy on all stages of planning, design, and implementation, including integrating Cisco Unified Contact Center and its Siebel CRM application. Any authorized employee in any location can retrieve customer interaction information for analysis and planning.

Results: The integration of Cisco Unified Communications and the CRM application is enabling Mediamarket to more accurately profile customers and identify trends, giving it a competitive advantage in product planning and developing multimedia marketing campaigns. As a result of Cisco Unified Communications, the time to set up a new store infrastructure has decreased from 15 to 10 days. The customer experience has improved as well, because customer questions are resolved approximately 20 percent faster.

Case Study: Healthcare Northern Lights Health Region

Business Challenge: The Northern Lights Health Region, in Northern Alberta, Canada, delivers healthcare services to a population of 70,000 spread across a very large geographic area. In 1999, the region introduced video-based telemedicine services to reach people in remote areas, but increasing circuit costs and long-distance telephone costs were high.

Solution: Northern Lights selected IBM and Cisco to design and deploy a converged network infrastructure that includes unified communications, videoconferencing, Cisco and IBM storage solutions, IBM servers and systems, and integration with the region's healthcare information system. The new infrastructure interconnects TDM-based PBX systems already present in some hospitals, as well as Cisco Unified Contact Center systems in other locations. It also creates an extended virtual contact center by connecting Northern Lights with more than 250 peer organizations and other healthcare providers inside and outside the province of Alberta.

Results: The new Cisco Unified Communications platform enables Northern Lights to deliver better diagnostics and patient treatment while controlling costs. For example, patients can walk into a clinic for an x-ray and then participate in an interactive video-conferencing session with an orthopedist located anywhere on the network. Not only has the joint solution from Cisco and IBM improved healthcare service delivery, it is also saving CDN\$75,000 annually because videoconferencing traffic travels over the IP network instead of dedicated circuits.

Conclusion

IP contact centers provide compelling benefits for simplifying operational processes, enhancing the customer experience, enhancing revenue, and simplifying growth. To capitalize on the opportunity, contact centers need a comprehensive solution that spans contact center people, processes, and technology. The joint IP contact center solution from Cisco and IBM provides all needed ingredients: the industry-leading Cisco Unified Contact Center platform, IBM hardware and software for contact center applications, and professional services from IBM Global Services to maximize ROI.

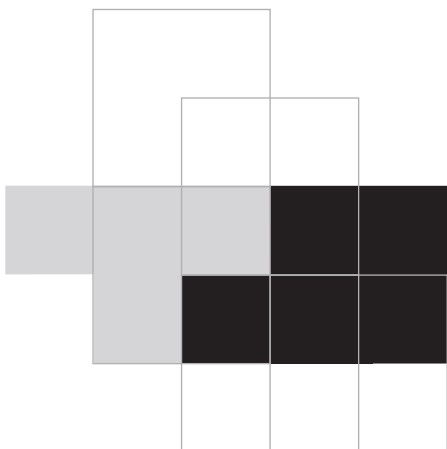
For More Information

To read more about the joint contact center solution from Cisco and IBM, visit www.cisco.com/go/ibm/contact_center.

To read more about Cisco Unified Contact Center solutions, visit www.cisco.com/go/cc.

To read more about IBM Global Services, visit www.ibm.com/services/us/index.wss/offerfamily/gn/a1000397.

To read more about the alliance between Cisco and IBM, visit www.ibm.com/cisco or www.cisco.com/go/ibm.



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