

Unique Retail/Work/Living Center Offers Competitive Benefits

Cisco IP network connects CityStars Cairo customers to the Internet, IP telephony, wireless networking, video, and more.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>Citystars Cairo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail • Cairo, Egypt • 250 employees <p>BUSINESS CHALLENGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanted to offer guests, customers, and tenants the latest information and communications technology services. • Needed the ability to quickly add Internet and IP telephony for new developments • Goal: to become the leading business center in the Middle East
<p>SOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployed Cisco converged IP voice/video/data network • Added IP telephony and Internet services • Installed wireless network and productivity applications
<p>BUSINESS RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex became immediate success for owner, merchants. • Owner gained competitive edge. • Improved profitability by 100% • Decreased costs by 30%

Business Challenge

Located in the Heliopolis neighborhood of Cairo, Egypt, CityStars Cairo is the largest multi-use complex in the Middle East and Europe. With three enormous pyramids in its commercial center, this 750,000 square meter landmark offers high-end residential, office, hospitality, shopping, catering, leisure, and entertainment; all within one integrated, self-contained facility. This unique development consists of 3 world-class hotels, 6 office buildings totaling 70,000 square meters, a hospital, a 550-store shopping mall, a 20,000 square meter international exhibition center, and 266 luxury residential units. "Nine years ago, this was a piece of desert, and the owner, Abdulrahman Sharbatly, had a vision to make something special, so he created this landmark," says Thierry Perrot, Area General Manager for the Intercontinental Hotel at CityStars.

When CityStars Cairo was still in the planning stages, Sharbatly decided that, if it was to be the leading

business center in the Middle East, it should have an advanced, Ethernet-everywhere network. This infrastructure would enable CityStars to provide fast Internet, IP telephony, broadcast video, video on demand, Web hosting services, and more. Merchants, hotel guests, residents, office workers, and customers would all be able to access the latest IT services and communications tools, with everything on one network.

Network Solution

In 2000, Sharbatly invited several vendors to bid on what would be the Middle East's largest and most advanced network, plus one of the region's largest IP telephony deployments. From these vendors, Cisco was chosen, as the company was the only one to recommend an integrated IP network infrastructure, the Architecture for Voice, Video, and Integrated Data (AVVID). "Among the main facilities and services we wanted to provide are communications and multimedia," says Elhamy El kerdany, General Manager of Stars Centre, the shopping center at CityStars. "And because Cisco is the leader in these fields, it was Cisco from the beginning."

Cisco utilized Raya, a third-party systems integrator, for the deployment, and had weekly meetings with Sharbatly and Raya throughout the first phase of the project (Raya became a Cisco Gold Partner after completion). By 2001, as 10,000 construction workers were toiling around the clock on CityStars, the network infrastructure, including 45,000 Ethernet ports, was deployed. IP telephony and Internet services were added, with 6,800 IP phones and 40 media convergence servers. Next, 20 Cisco Catalyst® 6500 series and 300 Catalyst® 3524 series core switches were deployed in the data center. In 2003, the newly-constructed Intercontinental Hotel gained complete wireless coverage. And the 2004-2006 phase created a dedicated company, StarCom, as the internal technology and service provider of CityStars, placing 18 Cisco-certified engineers in charge of the network, and deploying Operation and Business Support Systems, plus work order entry, SLA tools, and billing and accounting tools.

Business Results

In 2004, CityStars Cairo opened its doors to the public. “It is now considered the benchmark of the shopping center business in Egypt, as, for the first time ever, there is a large choice of brands,” says El kerdany. “It’s been very successful, and more and more businesses want to be associated with it,” says Perrot.”

The benefits of the technology deployment were numerous. It gave the owner, Sharbatly, an instant competitive edge. Now, customers and guests have fast access to voice calls, video, and Internet services, which are typically slow in Egypt. And the operators of the stores in the shopping mall are extremely happy. “Cisco improved the experience for the merchants, providing easy communication with the main factories as well as to their offices in Europe or the States,” says El kerdany.

“The CityStars network enables us to provide advanced IP services,” says Walid Azab, Operations Support Systems and Business Support Systems Team leader for CityStars. “These include premium IP telephony, virtual PBX services with unlimited extensions, broadband Internet with ultra-high speeds, robust security services, virtual private networks, virtual local area networks and video services, with free and premium channels from local content providers.” Businesses that lease space at CityStars can utilize StarCom Converged Services and save on inter-office and long-distance calling, while benefiting from IP telephony, Managed Call Center Services, Web Conferencing, and more. “Employees have greater mobility and freedom of choosing services,” says Azab. “They’re using the latest IP communication services at their premises on a daily basis, and that’s improving their day-to-day operations, increasing productivity, and reducing total cost of ownership.”

While Sharbatly did not expect to profit from the project, the network benefited him financially, as he sold hundreds of IP phones and earned additional revenue on phone calls. The Intercontinental Hotel also saw an increase in profitability. “We were the first hotel in Cairo to have the Internet and Wi-Fi,” says Perrot. “Technology is in such demand by our guests that at the moment, we are running at about two million Egyptian pounds revenue on the Internet, which is absolutely phenomenal.”

NEXT STEPS

Future plans call for CityStars Cairo to use the Cisco network to support wireless hotspots, content networking, call centers and other technologies. In addition, digital signage will be deployed, with 1,000 LCD screens and digital signs placed in the shopping mall. "These will be linked to all kinds of multimedia, and will be very useful for the tenants as well as for the shoppers," says El kerdany. In two years, the center will have earned back its investment through ad sales. Sharbatly has also stated that any new technologies that will enhance the retail market, generate revenue, and give CityStars a competitive edge will be deployed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about Cisco, go to: <http://www.cisco.com>

To learn more about CityStars Cairo, visit: <http://www.citystars.com.eg/citystars/starcom>

PRODUCT LIST
<p>Routing and Switching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 Cisco Catalyst 6500s, Sup720 and Sup 2 • 1,200 Cisco Catalyst 3500s • 2 Cisco Catalyst 6500s, with FWM, IDM, CSM, Content Engine 7326, and CiscoWorks in data center <p>Digital Signage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Cisco Digital Media Managers • 6 Cisco Wide Area Application Engines (WAE) with ACNS • 500 Cisco Digital Media Players (DMP) 4300G • Scientific Atlanta D9032 Encoder <p>IPTV Head End</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Cisco Digital Content Managers • 40 TITAN cards • 20 Indus cards • 4 Galaxy chassis <p>Security and VPN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 Cisco Firewall Services Modules (FWM) • 12 Cisco Intrusion Detection Security Modules (IDSM) • 2 Cisco PIX 525 Security Appliances • 4 Cisco Building Broadband Service Managers (BBSM) for hotels <p>Voice and IP Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 Cisco Call Managers • Cisco PGW Softswitch with 1k ports (32 E1s), HSI, BAMS, and AS5400 • Cisco Cat6k E1 Voice Modules • 6,800 Cisco IP Phones <p>Wireless</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 540 Cisco Aironet 1100 Access Points • 210 Cisco Aironet 1200 Access Points



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