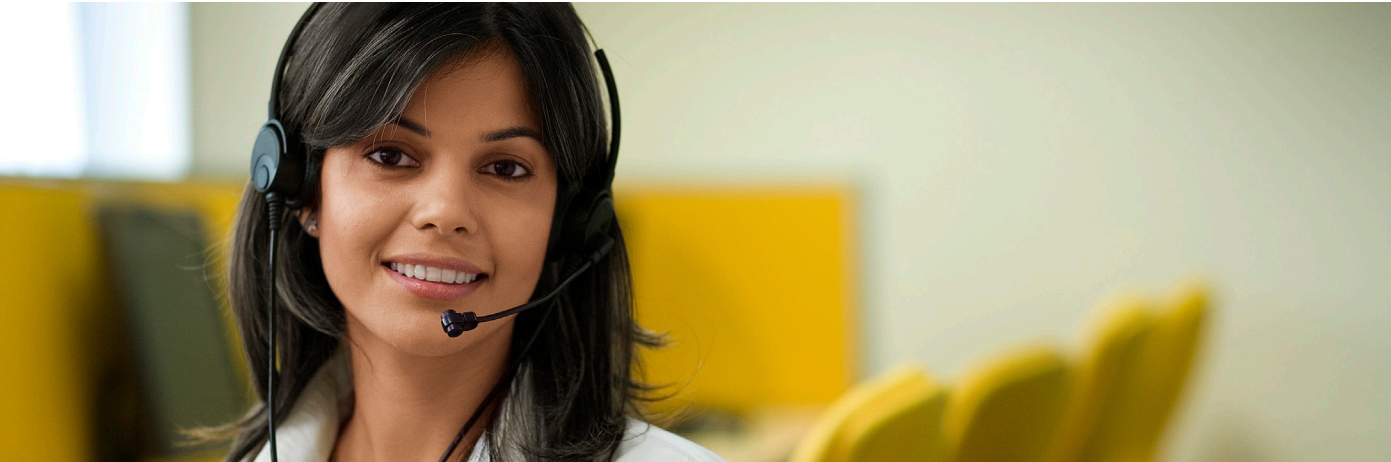


Day Spa Deploys New Phone System to Better Serve Customers



Spa Utopia improves call answer rate and consolidates contact centers with Cisco phone system and MPLS network.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer name: Spa Utopia
Industry: Health and wellness
Location: Langley, British Columbia
Number of employees: 250

Challenge

- Provide centralized phone system to link three spa locations
- Eliminate lost calls and reduce hold times to better serve customers
- Employ reporting to make better use of staffing resources

Solution

- Cisco phone system, MPLS network link multiple facilities
- Native call queuing helps ensure that calls are routed to next available agent—regardless of location
- Detailed reporting enables spa to track call activity and allocate resources accordingly

Results

- Reduced hold times, achieved call answer rate of 95 percent to improve customer experience
- Consolidated three contact centers into two by improving call-handling efficiency
- Enabled remote workforce with soft phones and Cisco AnyConnect VPN

Challenge

When Shona Houghton, manager of information systems, began working for Spa Utopia Health and Wellness Center almost a decade ago, she encountered a mixture of technology solutions that reflected the organization’s evolution from a single spa to the three-facility chain it is today. Headquartered in Langley, British Columbia, Spa Utopia also has two Vancouver facilities. When Houghton came on board in 2003, each location was an “island,” isolated from the others by separate computer and phone systems.

After joining the company, Houghton’s first order of business was to consolidate the three Spa Utopia locations onto a single server and centralize the computer systems. A few years later, the center had to take a good, hard look at its phone system. Says Houghton, “Our phones act as the gateway to our services and the first step in our customers’ journey. That journey, however, comes to an abrupt halt if someone calls to make an appointment and gets put on hold for 20 minutes.”

Unfortunately for Spa Utopia, this was precisely what was happening. Unable to transfer calls between locations and without the reporting capabilities that would provide insight into *all* call activity, Spa Utopia was having an increasingly difficult time fielding calls effectively. Customers were frustrated, and Houghton was frustrated that Spa Utopia was not making the best use of its resources.

Says Houghton, “We knew that some locations seemed to be better at answering phones than others, but without reporting, we had no way of telling why. All we really knew was that we weren’t using our resources very well if the phones were sitting idle at one location, while at another they were completely queued out with no one available to answer.”



“Thanks to Cisco Unified Contact Center Express, we can now spot usage patterns at various locations and allocate staff accordingly. And because call handling has improved, we require fewer call center resources.”

Shona Houghton
Manager of Information Systems
Spa Utopia Health and Wellness Center

Solution

Confronted with these issues and knowing that at least one location’s aging phone system was on the verge of failing, Houghton began looking for solutions. Luckily, Spa Utopia’s telecom partner and provider Telus Corporation offered to review the company’s phone systems. At the end of the process, Telus recommended Cisco® Business Edition 6000 and a Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) data network based on Cisco technology to centralize Spa Utopia’s telephone switching and provide each location with a secure and reliable connection to its point-of-sale system.

It didn’t take long for Spa Utopia to endorse the solution. “I believe in putting in technology that can grow with the business,” says Houghton, “and I knew that a VoIP system would be able to do so. The problem with a lot of VoIP systems, however, is that they can make people sound robotic or feel like they’re speaking into a well. With the Cisco system, we knew we would get both the audio quality we needed to sound professional and the failover capabilities that would enable us to continue taking calls even if one location went down.”

Best of all, the call-routing features in the accompanying Cisco Unified Contact Center Express application meant that customers would no longer languish on hold while they waited for an agent at their location of choice. All calls would now be automatically routed to the next available agent at any location. And the full range of reporting options meant that, for the first time, Spa Utopia would be able to track call activity across all locations.

Once the health-and-wellness center gave the Cisco solutions the go-ahead, deployment happened even faster than anticipated because the existing phone system Houghton had feared would fail did. After scrambling to deploy a temporary solution, Telus and Cisco worked as a united front to get the new phone system up and running quickly. According to Houghton, that process couldn’t have gone more smoothly.

“In the past,” says Houghton, “our telecom solution providers and partners haven’t always worked well together. In contrast, Cisco and Telus work very well together, which has made things infinitely easier from our perspective.”

Results

Spa Utopia is now using the phone system in ways that it didn’t anticipate. Take, for example, extension mobility. This is not a feature Houghton was looking for in a new phone system, but it’s proved invaluable for Spa Utopia employees. Since the hair designers, massage therapists, and other technicians who make up the bulk of Spa Utopia’s workforce are on their feet in treatment rooms, the company doesn’t provide dedicated desks or phones for the majority of its workers. With the extension mobility provided by Cisco Business Edition 6000, these employees can maintain private voicemail inboxes they can access from anywhere.

The biggest benefits conferred by the Cisco solutions, however, are Spa Utopia’s increased call-handling efficiency and the productivity gains and cost reductions that have come as a result. Says Houghton, “Our front-desk staff tells me we get far fewer voicemails with the new system, and I know for a fact that hold times have decreased. Today, 95 percent of calls are answered within four minutes (the maximum allowable hold time), whereas in the past, people were on hold 10 to 15 minutes, and we weren’t answering anywhere near that volume of calls.”

The more effective call-routing and reporting capabilities made possible by the Cisco solution have allowed the company to allocate its resources more effectively. “Thanks to Cisco Unified Contact Center Express,” says Houghton, “we can now spot usage patterns at various locations and allocate staff accordingly. And because call handling has improved, we require fewer call-center resources.” As a result, Spa Utopia was able to eliminate one of its three call centers, garnering considerable cost savings in the process.

Also appreciative of the new phone system are Spa Utopia’s “road warriors,” the key management personnel who perform the majority of their work from home. For them, the ability to use the Cisco AnyConnect® VPN to access the company’s data and applications remotely is key, so too is the ability to connect via soft phones to reduce long-distance and wireless costs.

As for Houghton, she’s happy when her users are happy. “Employees love these phones,” she says. “One of the first things I noticed about the system was how user friendly it is. With the old system, employees were afraid to even try transferring calls, whereas everything on the new system is simple and menu driven.”

Not surprisingly, this ease of use makes Houghton’s job easier as well. Not only does she receive far fewer complaints, but adding users and maintaining the system is easy as well. Plus, she sleeps better at night knowing that even if disaster strikes one location, Spa Utopia can still retrieve calls from other areas, thanks to the fully redundant MPLS network and a phone system that supports redundant call control in remote locations through Cisco Unified Survivable Remote Site Telephony.

Next Steps

As Spa Utopia looks to extend its operations to other areas in the future, Houghton is confident that the new Cisco phone system will be able to accommodate that growth. “With Cisco Business Edition 6000, we have a phone system that’s robust and reliable enough to grow with our business,” she says. “Whether it’s extending agent services beyond the call centers to remote locations or incorporating chat so that customers can book appointments on the company’s website, we’re eager to learn more about how we can use our Cisco collaboration solutions to better serve customers and employees.”

More Information

To find out more about Cisco solutions, visit www.cisco.com/go/midmarket.

Product List

- Cisco Business Edition 6000
- Cisco Unified Contact Center Express
- Cisco AnyConnect Secure Mobility Client
- Cisco Unified Survivable Remote Site Telephony
- Cisco-based MPLS network
- Cisco Unified IP Phone 7962G



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