Australia’s top Rugby League scores big

National Rugby League drives membership and revenue with collaboration and unified communications.

“We have the technology we need to grow one of Australia’s most entertaining, engaging, and respected sports.”

- Maurice Veliz, IT Manager, NRL

National Rugby League is often referred to as “football that doesn’t stop.” In a league of 16 teams that hosts what is regarded as the world’s elite rugby league championship, services and communications can’t stop either.

Challenges

- Facilitate secure, consistent communications and collaboration
- Enable rapid office expansion and data sharing with centralized and standardized infrastructure
- Increase membership and fan engagement

The National Rugby League (NRL) is the top league of professional rugby league clubs in Australia and New Zealand, and runs one of the world’s elite rugby leagues. The Australian Rugby League Commission is the controlling body and administrator of the game that oversees the restructure of staff levels, which has grown from 80 staff members to 600. The commission recognizes the importance of technology and the role it plays in the sport.

With the relocation of its Sydney headquarters, League Central became the hub to host services for 12 branch offices. It was a great opportunity to replace an aging analog phone system to support mobile workers and a new outbound call center to drive club membership. Kytec, the NRL’s trusted partner, recommended a Cisco® solution.

“We wanted a unified data center and communications solution from a single vendor,” says Maurice Veliz, IT manager for the NRL. “Cisco was the only company that could provide an end-to-end solution.”

Case Study | National Rugby League (NRL)

Size: 650 Employees | Location: Sydney, Australia | Industry: Sports and Entertainment
A complete solution from Cisco and Kytec provides a foundation for collaboration and mobility.

Consistent communications and workforce experience
Following the deployment, NRL was excited about the technology used to grow the NRL fan base and about the Cisco TelePresence solutions so that employees can work from any location and have the same user experience as if they were in the NRL offices.

“One third of our employees are mobile,” says Veliz. “With Cisco solutions, we can provide a consistent experience across offices and devices. This was a big win.”

Raising the standards of the game
The NRL field workers—mostly young professionals—immediately embraced the mobility tools. Game development teams collaborate to keep training, coaching, and rule interpretation consistent.

Increasing club membership by 40 percent
With an integrated contact center “in a box,” the league’s membership drive was wildly successful, meeting its 1-year goal of a 25 percent increase in just 3 months and achieving 40 percent increase by year’s end. The drive has been so effective that the NRL increased contact center staffing from 10 agents to 20 and has the potential to double the fan base, again.

Richer fan experiences
The NRL Fan Relationship Management Center can now connect fans with specific seats using video on mobile devices. "It’s better to show a video than a photo," says Veliz. "Fans love the experience."

High quality videoconferencing
The high-definition (HD) video quality meets NRL standards. Clubs have the option to conduct player judiciary hearings remotely and make decisions quickly, reducing travel and related costs.
Offering clubs better technology
The NRL administration is leading the way in technology with a roadmap to help clubs transform their IT and communication services.

Results
- Connect 16 clubs for collaboration
- Help membership drive to reach 160 percent of goal
- Establish a scalable platform for continued growth

Simplifying teamwork and fan outreach
The NRL is considering deploying Cisco Collaboration Meeting Rooms Hybrid for virtual meeting rooms and using Cisco Spark for one-on-one chats with fans. “The Cisco tools are easy to use for all NRL stakeholders,” says Veliz.

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