

Service Provider Assures Scalable Platform for the Cloud



Daisy Communications adopts Cisco IP Next Generation Network to stay at forefront of U.K. competition

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Daisy Communications

Industry: Service Provider

Location: United Kingdom

Number of Employees: 1400

Challenge

- Integrate diverse legacy networks after rapid run of multiple acquisitions
- Target long-term investment with assured scalability for cloud-based applications
- Provide customers of all sizes with new, cost effective cloud products
- Gain the technology capabilities required to acquire more FTSE 100 customers

Solution

- Cisco IP Next Generation Network creates seamless and high-capacity infrastructure for advanced voice, video, and mobile
- Cisco Unified Computing System and Nexus Series Switches, standardising operations across three U.K. data centres and delivering cloud-based offerings

Results

- Hosted cloud-based data and voice products offer pay-as-you-go computing resources and high-end PBX functions
- Reduced time to deliver customer solutions sharpens pace of business expansion
- Cost savings and ease of management help enable business growth without rise in headcount

Challenge

Daisy Communications is a fast-growing independent service provider based in the U.K. It offers up-to-date business communications services including broadband, fixed and mobile telephony, and cloud and hosting services. The company has more than 65,000 customers, from small and medium enterprises to mid-market firms and larger companies in the FTSE 100.

Combining strong organic growth with multiple acquisitions, Daisy Communications continues to build its client base and gain new service capabilities to become an end-to-end provider of business communications.

This strategic vision underpins the investment in its network, which has helped enable the business to become a key player in the U.K. market for cloud-based services. These offer clients significant cost savings and economies of scale, while freeing them from the financial and management burdens of server and network ownership.

Steve Colam, director of networks and hosting operations at Daisy Communications, says: "In preparation for our move into cloud-based services, we carried out a searching review of our assets with a view to providing a highly-scalable, future proof foundation."

Solution

The Daisy Communications team embarked on a consultative process, building on a strong partnership of trust with Cisco. It concluded the only solution that would offer scope for long-term business expansion, in an environment evolving too quickly for an accurate assessment of future capacity needs, was a Cisco® IP Next Generation Network (NGN).

Cisco IP NGN creates a cohesive infrastructure for advanced voice, video, mobile, and cloud-based services. With high-performance Cisco Aggregation Services Router (ASR) 9000 Series Routers at its core, Daisy Communications now has a multiservice platform potentially capable of speeds up to 96Tbps. The network is configured, initially, for a more modest 20Gbps, but this level represents a tenfold increase over its old system.



“It’s about having the right platform that will scale with our requirements; and that we can utterly trust to do what it’s supposed to. Cisco gives us that.”

Steven Colam
Director of Networks and Hosting Operations
Daisy Communications

The solution is supplemented at the edge by Cisco ASR 1000 Series Routers. Powerful and compact, and expressly designed for the service provider market, ASR 1000 Series Routers combine leading processing performance with scalable service intelligence. These capabilities simplify network architecture and cut operating expenses, while the devices can be rapidly configured to meet emerging service delivery requirements.

“Much of our time is spent building edge client solutions that take maximum advantage of the core,” says Steve Colam, “so we need 100 percent reliability in hardware and software alike. It’s about having the right platform that will scale with our requirements; and that we can utterly trust to do what it’s supposed to. Cisco gives us that.”

The superior capabilities of the Cisco IP NGN are complemented by Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS®) servers and Cisco Nexus® Series Switches, which together form a central platform for virtualising and delivering cloud offerings. Cisco Unified Data Centre architecture has also helped enable Daisy Communications to standardise operations across three data centres in London, Manchester, and Southampton, while improving visibility and management control as the company handles ever-growing data volumes.

The migration from the old network to the new was accomplished in phases to provide business continuity. The new platform was run in parallel with its predecessor, while the Cisco Technical Assistance Centre (TAC) provided skilled engineering support. Selected services were transitioned to the new network, following extensive testing to help ensure interoperability with the legacy system. Thereafter, services were switched over to the new platform by degrees for a steady, safe transition.

Results

Since installing its new Cisco solution, Daisy Communications has launched two cloud service offerings: CloudSelect Computing and CloudSelect Voice. The first helps enable customers to access computing resources on demand, which means they pay only for what they use. Meanwhile, CloudSelect Voice is a next-generation telephony service, hosted and managed by Daisy Communications, that provides the sophisticated functionality of a high-end private branch exchange (PBX) at a highly competitive cost.

Take-up of both is increasing rapidly, and Daisy Communications is confident that the Cisco solution provides a complete cloud-ready platform. “We can’t afford to put our network technology in the bin every three years; it has to be able to scale for unknown requirements,” says Colam. Analysis conducted by Daisy Communications shows that traffic volumes are growing steeply, which its network has to be able to handle. “The Cisco ASR 9000 infrastructure enables us to do just that,” adds Colam, “and it makes us comfortable that we’ll still be able to do it in several years’ time.”

The all-UK location of its systems already allows Daisy Communications to assure customers of low network latency, and the company has earned ISO certifications for quality and security. The company believes end-to-end control of its computing and network resources will help allay fear of data loss, which it sees as one of the major inhibitions holding back potential cloud customers.

While future cloud capacity was the primary driver for the Cisco IP NGN upgrade, the migration has also brought operational and cost benefits. For example, the installation of Cisco ASR 1006 Series Routers has helped enable the rationalisation from more than 40 broadband routers down to six, while the introduction of 10Gbps capacity means the company no longer has to aggregate tens of 1Gbps connections to reach reasonable speeds. It also means less network complexity and greater ease of management, which will allow the service provider to handle many more customers cost effectively.

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Andrew Lockwood
Commercial Director, Data Solutions
Daisy Communications

Andrew Lockwood, commercial director for data solutions at Daisy Communications, says: “We have the best network to be the leading next-generation communications company. Most of our systems, networks and capabilities are new compared with competitors with legacy equipment. We’ve got agility, we can move faster, and we can provide a better service to our customers.”

Next Steps

The early foray into cloud services with CloudSelect Computing and CloudSelect Voice is only the beginning for Daisy Communications. In the longer term, the upgrade to a Cisco IP NGN will help enable the company adapt swiftly to changing business needs and respond quickly to new market demands, particularly from the larger enterprise customers that the company is targeting. These needs include launching and monetizing new cloud services, optimising performance and efficiency, reducing operational cost and complexity, and enhancing the experience both for new and existing customers.

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco technologies described above, please click on these links:

[Cisco IP Next-Generation Networks](#)

[Cisco ASR Routers](#)

Product List

Routing and Switching

- Cisco ASR 9000 Series Aggregation Services Routers
- Cisco ASR 1000 Series Switches

Data Centre

- Cisco Unified Computing System
- Cisco Nexus Series Switches



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