

IT Services Company Seizes Market Share in the Cloud



Steria uses Cisco Prime Service Catalog Cloud Portal as foundation for innovative Workplace on Command service

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Steria

Industry: IT services

Location: Europe, India, and Singapore

Number of Employees: 17,000

Challenge

- Improve profitability
- Increase market share
- Reduce administration

Solution

- Cloud offering based on Cisco Prime Service Catalog
- FlexPod architecture with Cisco Unified Computing System and Nexus 5000
- Cisco Services including design, validation, and deployment

Results

For Steria's customers

- Cut integration effort in half
- Reduced end-user intervention by 80 percent

For Steria

- Created new revenue streams from new and existing customers
- Reduced customer administration by up to 30 percent

Challenge

Ever been frustrated at not being able to open a file because you didn't have the right software? Or wished you could access your desktop apps from your tablet or mobile? In 2011, such concerns inspired executives at Steria, a leading European systems integrator and IT services provider.

The company realized that an opportunity might exist for a flexible system extending self-provisioning desktop services accessible from any device, using a cloud-based delivery model. "The desktop-as-a-service offer is not very mature in Europe," says Eric Fradet, industrialization director for Service Line Infrastructure Management at Steria.

Fradet thought that a sustainable and reliable offer giving customers an alternative to the traditional desktop model would be attractive. "Especially if we could borrow from current culture to also deliver an innovative enterprise app store to provide instant provisioning and workplace management," he adds.

Research was conducted to test the company's hunch, which found that most of its customers felt they had already optimized desktop computing total cost of ownership. Fradet continues: "Consequently, we had to include added-value services to deliver a total cost of ownership comparable to the current one, offering more services for the same price."

A core requirement was for the system to support user demand to 'bring-your-own-device.' Setting an ambitious nine-month deployment schedule, Steria went to market in search of the required technologies.

Solution

Steria relies on a wide range of Cisco® products for applications as diverse as IP telephony and IT security. The company had also adopted Cisco technology for the launch of its first cloud offering, an infrastructure-as-a-service product called Infrastructure On Command based on Cisco Unified Computing System® (UCS™) servers and Cisco Nexus® switches.



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Eric Fradet
Industrialization Director
Service Line Infrastructure Management
Groupe Steria SCA

“This helped tip the balance in favor of Cisco,” says Fradet: “From a hardware perspective, our existing cloud offer is based on UCS. It’s known to our team, and we’re happy with it.”

However, because the new service was to be deployed to end users, its software-based front end had to be simple and flexible. Steria found this combination in the Cloud Portal offering within the Cisco Prime™ Service Catalog. A unified, self-service portal for ordering any type of workplace IT or data center service, Prime Service Catalog provides a simple-to-navigate menu of standard options.

“We wanted a simple, flexible model to download, install, and remove applications on cloud-based workplaces, whatever device the customer is using, where the end user can import their workplace context onto any end point,” says Fradet.

After comparing four vendors, Steria chose Cisco to provide the technology foundation for its service. “Only the Prime Service Catalog met 95 percent of our expectations in terms of automation, customization, and a simple way to manage workplaces with a user-friendly experience,” Fradet says. “Cisco was the first, no problem.”

Called Workplace On Command, the service also uses Microsoft technology for the service center and Windows applications, NetApp for storage, and Citrix to allow users to swap desktops or applications between devices. The Workplace On Command infrastructure was deployed in the Paris-based Steria data center using FlexPod, a pre-designed and pre-validated base data center configuration built on Cisco UCS and Nexus hardware, with NetApp storage and a range of software options.

Cisco Services worked closely with Steria to help shape the solution: taking it from a smart original concept; refining business requirements; clarifying the portal’s technical requirements; specifying dictionary definitions; and developing the high-level and low-level designs.

The Cisco Services team then supported the implementation of the project and delivered post-implementation training. “There was no phase where Cisco was not involved,” Fradet says. “Cisco was the prime contractor, more than just a sub-contractor.”

It was important for Steria to work closely with Cisco engineers. “We are an IT provider, and when we deploy a brand new product, we always work with the vendor directly because it’s the best way to climb the learning curve,” says Fradet. With Cisco Services at the helm, deployment was completed in less than five months. Very quick, considering the number of separate project requirements, and it met the market window identified by Steria.

Results

Essentially, Workplace On Command lets workers with no knowledge of IT select and automatically install the applications they need using the Steria WorkStore enterprise application store. Application usage is monitored by the system, and the portal even suggests when users can de-install applications that have not been used for some time, reducing license costs, simplifying administration, and reducing desktop clutter.

When Steria Group CEO François Enaud launched Workplace On Command at a press conference in Paris, he told journalists it was: “A new revolution in the enterprise IT environment: the first fully virtualized workplace environment accessible from any device, anywhere, at any time.”



“Our position in the market has changed. We increased our revenue, gained market share, and improved our profitability because we proposed an innovative offer.”

Eric Fradet
Industrialization Director
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Steria offers around 20 standard applications in its out-of-the-box service catalog, along with virtualized company-specific business applications that can be enabled within virtual workplaces. The WorkStore portal only presents users with services that they are authorized to use, and manages the workflows to approve additions and changes against customer requirements. Workplace On Command is simple and quick to use. If a user needs a new application, it can be provisioned in less than two minutes, whereas previously it might have taken a corporate IT team a couple of days to fully complete the installation.

For Steria customers, the result is that IT teams are seeing about an 80 percent reduction in the amount of end-user intervention needed. They are now using Workplace On Command to avoid costly IT deployments, since new applications can be delivered with no human intervention. This is also helping extend the lifecycle of equipment, because it allows new services to be deployed easily to existing end points such as traditional desktops, laptops, thin clients, tablets, or mobile devices.

The Steria IT team has also benefited. Since the portal offering was created from the beginning as a fully-integrated system, the effort for Steria engineers to understand, manage, and operate the platform is about half what it would have been if Workplace On Command had comprised a number of disparate systems. This benefit extends to reporting. With a single repository for all customer data, instead of several sources that have to be collated, the effort involved in administering reports is reduced on average by up to 30 percent per customer.

The launch of Workplace On Command has marked a watershed for Steria, and besides the technology, much of its success is attributed to the partnership attitude adopted by Cisco throughout the project.

“It has changed our position in the market,” Fradet concludes. “Launching such an innovative offer has enabled Steria to increase revenues, gain market share, and improve our profitability. But beyond that, and adding value at each layer, Cisco worked with us as a partner and an integrator. At each stage of the program we worked closely together to meet a shared vision. Cisco Services was so much more than a supplier: Cisco is a real strategic partner for us.”

Next Steps

Steria is currently using FlexPod to build a second data center in the United Kingdom. Workplace On Command is recommended to Steria clients facing challenging Windows XP migrations or as a strong alternative to traditional desktop management, enabling better license control, power savings and more flexible asset management policies.

“Cisco is at the core of our data center strategy,” Fradet says. “There’s no doubt about future collaboration, we are keen to partner more and more with Cisco.”

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco architectures and solutions featured in this case study, please go to:

www.cisco.com/go/flexpod

www.cisco.com/go/services

www.cisco.com/go/service-catalog



Product List

FlexPod Components

- Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS)
 - Cisco UCS B230 M3 Blade Servers
- Cisco Nexus 5548 Series Switches
- Cisco Nexus 1000V Virtual Series Switches
- Citrix NetScaler 11500
- NetApp FAS 62xx + 32xx Storage System

Fabric Interconnects

- Cisco UCS 6140XP Series Fabric Interconnects

Cisco Services

- Planning
- Design
- Implementation

Software

- Cisco Prime Service Catalog
- Citrix XenDesktop
- Microsoft Core Infrastructure Suite (Windows 2012 server, SCCM, SCVMM, SCOM, Hyper-V), SQL Server



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