Synetra Broadens Its Small Business Portfolio with Cisco Managed Services

Partner Case Study

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**PARTNER: SYNETRA**
- IT services partner
- Location: Southlake, Texas
- Employees: Approximately 50

**CUSTOMER: SONORA BANK**
- Regional savings and loan
- Location: Sonora, San Angelo, and Boerne, Texas
- Employees: Approximately 90

**SOLUTIONS**
- Cisco TelePresence SX Series and video-conferencing hardware, Cisco Jabber® license
- TeleSpace delivered Cisco TelePresence as-a-Service

**CUSTOMER SUCCESS**
- Sophisticated technology for a lower cost
- Eliminated commuting costs
- Improved interbranch relationships
- Enabled the bank to expand more easily
- Accessible from anywhere in the world

**BUSINESS RESULTS**
- Use new model for other customers
- Offer broader solutions portfolio to small businesses
- Provide new value as reseller

Synetra delivers Cisco TelePresence® video conferencing to Sonora Bank and opens the door to small customers everywhere.

**Introduction**

From its headquarters in the city of Sonora, Texas, Sonora Bank serves the many communities spread out across west central Texas. In an effort to improve employee communications, develop tighter relationships, and reduce travel costs due to long drive times between branch offices, the bank made the decision to deploy video conferencing throughout its locations.

**Customer Business Challenges**

Sonora Bank’s budget for the year did not include purchasing the end-to-end infrastructure for its own internal use. Such a video conferencing solution would be in excess of $50,000, and the bank had not budgeted for that type of investment. Luckily, Synetra, its IT services partner, had an idea.

C.B. Notley Jr. at Synetra reached out to his Cisco® distributor, KBZ, explained Sonora’s situation, and asked if KBZ could help. That’s when KBZ suggested using one of its cloud providers, TeleSpace. TeleSpace specializes in delivering business voice, high-definition (HD) video, and customer care applications through its cloud service subscriptions running on its world-class Quad Core Network.

The stakeholders at TeleSpace, KBZ, and Synetra put their heads together, and soon they had the perfect solution to bring video conferencing to Sonora Bank’s disperse branches. It combined the best of Cisco hardware and TeleSpace’s delivery capability to provide a highly reliable and cost-effective Cisco Powered services. It made communicating between remote offices easier than ever. And it costs the bank only US$1100 each month.

**Technical Solution**

The traditional approach when deploying video conferencing is to purchase all of the hardware needed for point-to-point communications outright, including a multipoint conference unit to support larger meetings, video-conferencing units for remote
locations, and some external firewall software, which allows personnel outside the bank’s network to be included on calls. Not only can the infrastructure be costly, but it also can be complex to manage.

Given the bank’s budget constraints, both Synetra and Sonora felt a cloud solution made a lot of sense. Sonora bought Cisco TelePresence SX Series video-conferencing hardware, including several small units and some larger units to fit the needs of each branch office, and connect with each other using Cisco TelePresence as a Service (TaaS). The bank didn’t have to make a large, initial capital expenditure, choosing to pay small monthly installments instead. But it still got what it wanted: the sophisticated technology employed by much larger banks.

Normally, it would take Sonora Bank 4 years to spend the same $50,000 that it would have had to pay up front. Yet, by the end of those four years, its technology investment will likely need an upgrade or a replacement. So, in the long run, purchasing an in-house solution would have cost even more. As it stands, the financial burden of future technology upgrades rests with TeleSpace.

Customer Success

On the surface, Sonora Bank was able to deploy its video-conferencing capabilities for very low cost. Plus, it saves thousands of dollars each month on travel costs alone. It also pays no annual maintenance costs for the technology. But the benefits don’t end with dollars and cents.

“We have branches in different areas of the state, and they were all working independently. If each branch had continued to isolate itself, then we wouldn’t have operated as a unified bank with a singular vision. Video conferencing prevented that by helping the bank’s executives develop closer relationships.”

— Hans Mensch, Technology Manager, Sonora Bank

With the new system in place, the bank can now host branchwide meetings, and employees don’t have to drive great distances to attend them in person. The solution allows point-to-multipoint video conferencing, so every office can participate simultaneously. As a result, the bank’s executives and officers have strengthened their relationships. Also, when bank executives are traveling, they can now securely participate in calls from anywhere in the world.

In short, Sonora Bank now enjoys the easy-to-use, HD video-conferencing capabilities of a big city bank, only on a smaller bank’s budget. Synetra also worked out the Domain Name System (DNS)details, helping to ensure that the bank’s domain is used when dialing, so no one can tell that the call infrastructure is hosted. Whenever employees, partners, or customers call in, all they see on their displays is the Sonora Bank system.

“We’re a community bank. We enjoy our relationships with customers. Even as we grow, we want to maintain that community feel. We also hope our vendors treat us with the same respect we offer our customers. Synetra did that, creating a relationship that was perfect for us.”

— Hans Mensch, Technology Manager, Sonora Bank
Business Results

To the Synetra team, finding this novel solution for Sonora Bank was an eye opener. Suddenly, Synetra was no longer limited in the solutions it can offer small businesses. In fact, Synetra is now deploying similar cloud services for engineering, and oil and gas company customers.

In the past, Synetra offered solutions that it knew would never be approved because customers simply didn’t have the budget. Now Synetra is rethinking the way it sells solutions. Through services, they can now meet the needs of smaller customers in a way it never could before. Consequently, Sonora Bank took the futility out of pitching impractical solutions to smaller customers. Now the bank provides big business solutions to smaller businesses at a much more affordable cost.

The growing number of service subscriptions that Synetra now sees speaks for itself. With cloud solutions, small companies can add capabilities at a fraction of the cost. And they don’t have to worry about operability, maintenance, and upgrades. Before, selling to smaller customers was often unfeasible. Now, the professionals at Synetra feel like they have a much broader portfolio of possibilities to offer its smaller customers.

“Sometimes, you look at Cisco solutions and say, ‘This is great for my customer with 10,000 employees, but it really doesn’t fit for my customer with 15 employees.’ So with these new services we’re seeing rolled out, you finally feel like you have a broad enough portfolio to approach a customer of any size.”

—C.B. Notley Jr., Sr. Account Manager, Synetra

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