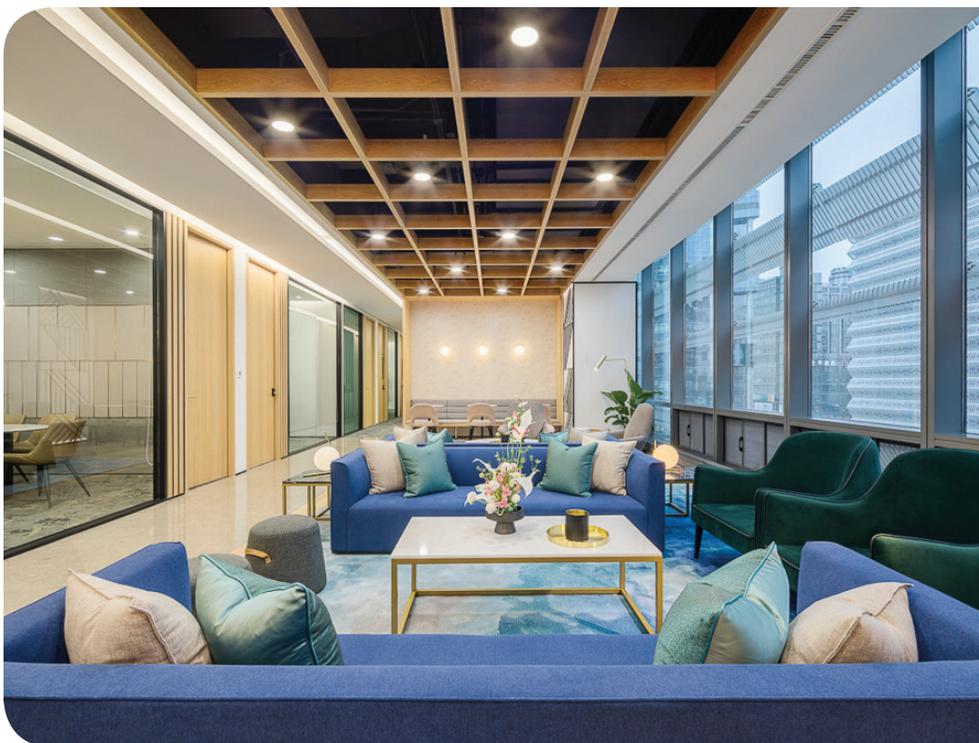




A Data-Driven Approach To Building Client Relationships

Cisco Meraki has helped Arcc Spaces achieve a deeper understanding of its customers, optimize resource allocation and enhance service levels.



Arcc Spaces

Industry:

Shared workspaces

Location:

18 centres across 6 Asian cities - Singapore, Shanghai, Beijing, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, & Yangon

Size:

170+ employees

Website:

www.arccspaces.com



Challenges

- Achieving a deeper understanding of customers' usage behaviors
- Improving management of the network infrastructure, reducing administrative burdens
- Instituting a centralized network, while accommodating site-to-site variations in business requirements
- Facilitating faster rollouts of applications



Solution

- MX67 & M84 Security Appliances
- MR18 & MR32/33 Wireless Access Points



Results

- Richer insights delivered through data analytics, facilitating the

delivery of highly personalized service to customers

- Significant savings in time and costs, faster rollout of applications
- Remote troubleshooting and faster recovery in the event of hardware failures
- Network upgrades and security patches are done remotely and in hours instead of days as was the case previously
- Improved convenience and management of network infrastructure
- Optimization of network performance

Arcc Spaces provides shared working, meeting and event spaces to customers across 18 centers in six major Asian cities – Singapore, Shanghai, Beijing, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong and Yangon. The centers are a series of beautifully designed business hubs, lounges and labs, providing a convenient, collaborative environment to customers. The locations provide a range of business amenities, facilitating networking and helping customers to identify and tap business opportunities. Up to 5,000 customers from a variety of business sectors and company sizes use Arcc Spaces’ facilities daily.

“No two days are ever the same at Arcc Spaces,” IT Manager Donald Lee said. “The needs of our clients are always evolving. Through daily interaction with our clients in and around our spaces, we obtain insights into their personal and professional preferences and ambitions, enabling us to better serve them through thoughtfully curated programming, partner recommendations, or simply connecting them with other clients for greater business synergy.”

Lost opportunities due to a siloed infrastructure

Donald saw the opportunity to collect rich insights on his customers’ needs through IT. This in turn would allow Arcc Spaces to enhance and personalize its services for its customers. However, the company’s existing infrastructure was not able to take advantage of this. Arcc Spaces had grown over the years but a number of its sites were still relying on legacy hardware and standards. The IT team had challenges managing what was then a very disparate network infrastructure across the region, comprising solutions from multiple manufacturers. The team also did not have good network visibility and what data it did have was often incomplete and inaccurate, since the equipment from different manufacturers did not interface with one another seamlessly.

“It was a very siloed infrastructure,” Donald explained. “Practically every center had its own brand of hardware, with different settings. Changes in VLAN/policies occurred frequently, and we needed to closely track these changes. Every time I wanted to have a connection, I needed to launch a VPN for that location, which made administration and policy changes very tedious.”



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IT Manager, Arcc Spaces

He added: “We also needed to provision static IP addresses for each device so that administrators were able to launch web or shell access to devices. With multiple sites across multiple countries, this was a huge administrative burden for us. Using dynamic addresses was also not feasible as it would be impossible to find the device.” In addition, managing legacy devices required keeping track of administrator credentials, as well as storing a copy of the latest backup for every device in the network.



“The cloud management portal allows administrators to make changes on the fly, without having to launch VPN sessions.”

Donald Lee
IT Manager, Arcc Spaces

The challenge for Arcc Spaces was to institute a centralized network which while accommodating site-to-site variations in business requirements, still enabled easier management, faster deployment of new applications and global updates and security patches.

As Arcc Spaces had a very lean IT team, it was also critical to achieve a more optimal allocation of resources, especially as its operations is expected to continue to scale across the region.

The cloud advantage

To address these challenges, Arcc Spaces implemented a cloud-managed solution comprising of the MX67 and MX84 security appliances and MR18 and MR32/33 wireless access points. Cisco Meraki’s cloud-based management solution now provides centralized visibility and control over both wired & wireless networking hardware, without the cost and complexity of wireless controllers or overlay management systems. Integrated with Meraki’s entire product portfolio, cloud management provides feature-rich, scalable, and intuitive centralized management for networks of any size.

“The best thing about the Cisco Meraki solution was the cloud management portal,” Donald said. “It allows administrators to make changes on the fly, without having to launch VPN sessions. We can now remotely monitor and make changes on networks, without having to be on site. This is especially useful when the only device available to an administrator is a smart phone.”

Previously, the IT team had to devote entire weekends to do reconfigurations or updates to hardware. However, as the Cisco Meraki solution is a fully cloud-based solution, updates and security patches are now accomplished within hours instead of what used to take days. “I can do it anytime, anywhere, even at home, at the click of a button,” Donald said.

While the IT team previously needed to have command line knowledge to do deployments – something which they therefore outsourced – the Cisco Meraki solution’s user-friendly interface removed the need for it. It is possible now to replicate and deploy network architectures for new sites with similar requirements, significantly lowering the administrative work for the team.

“We are now able to deploy at a very fast rate, even for our new centers,” Donald said. Since everything is on the cloud, all the settings are pushed down instantly. There’s not much physical configuration required on our end.”



He added: “Recovery times, if there is a hardware failure, have also been shortened tremendously. There is no need to search for backup configuration files – configurations are pushed down from the cloud to replacement devices.”

Another benefit of the Cisco Meraki system is that it allows all devices to receive addresses via DHCP, and still be configured when required. Without DHCP, IT admin would need to manually configure each client device with this information while keeping track of the pool of available IP addresses, rescinding the addresses of clients who have left the network to ensure new clients can receive IPs – a laborious and time-consuming task.

Thanks to the efficiencies enabled by the Cisco Meraki solution, Arcc Spaces is able to achieve tremendous savings in costs and time. Donald estimates 40 percent savings in manhours for management and maintenance. In addition, the IT team does not have to travel as frequently as before to troubleshoot and resolve network-related issues. The ability to remotely troubleshoot has also lowered the cost of support needed from technology partners.

“Everything is in a single portal, providing a view to the entire network – it’s easy to manage from anywhere, anytime, even on the phone,” Donald said.

He added: “At a personal level, we are also pleased with the aftersales support we have received from Cisco Meraki. Compared to my previous experience with other

brands, the support I received from Cisco Meraki has been several notches higher.”

Cost efficiencies and superior customer service through data analytics

Through the Cisco Meraki system, Arcc Spaces is also able to generate a lot of data on its customers’ usage patterns. “This was a critical consideration for us in deciding to go with Cisco Meraki,” Donald said. “Advanced analytics helps us to better understand user behavior and make quick decisions to not only optimize network performance but also to enhance customer service.”

This was a huge difference over the previous network infrastructure through which the team was only able to generate basic analytics on bandwidth. Now they are able to obtain deeper insights on application usage, time spent at specific areas of the offices, usage of critical vs non-critical applications, and even in terms of tracking bandwidth usage throughout the day.

“Data is what drives business these days,” Donald said. Our customers come from a varied range of business sectors and are of varying company sizes – from small businesses to large enterprises. Arcc Spaces goes beyond the ‘one size fits all’ approach and tries to deliver highly personalized services to its customers. Data analytics is critical to understanding how each of our customers is unique, allowing us to customize our services.”



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