

Telecommunications and Digital Entertainment Provider Fosters Innovation Through Collaboration

Customer Case Study



Virgin Media strengthens innovation by connecting employees using WebEx Social, WebEx Meetings, and TelePresence

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Virgin Media

Industry: Telecommunications and Digital Entertainment

Location: United Kingdom

Number of Employees: 20,000

Challenge

- Make it easier to bring people and resources together across hundreds of offices, reducing travel for internal meetings
- Increase staff satisfaction and improve work life balance
- Support environmental sustainability and increasing number of devices connecting to the network

Solution

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager, supporting feature-rich IP Telephony and collaboration applications
- Cisco WebEx Social helps distributed teams collaborate efficiently
- Cisco WebEx Meetings and Cisco TelePresence enable high-definition video conferencing
- Cisco Services design and implementation accelerates time to value

Results

- Thousands of hours freed up for innovation by saving 15 minutes daily per employee
- Employee engagement enhanced through personal involvement in innovation and face-to-face interactions, lowering travel costs
- Improved work life balance for Virgin Media staff

Challenge

One of the UK's leading telecommunications and digital entertainment providers, Virgin Media has built its success through innovation. Among its achievements are being first in the country with quadruple-play services (broadband, TV, mobile phone and voice) as well as 3D and HDTV on demand.

Virgin Media came into being through mergers and acquisitions, and today has 20,000 employees across 350 permanently managed sites. As part of a strategic initiative to increase business agility, the Virgin Media executive team interviewed dozens of successful companies in multiple industries. "The common theme for success was collaboration," says Colin Miles, director IT technical services for Virgin Media.

To strengthen its innovation culture, Virgin Media launched a flexible working initiative. The idea was to provide easy-to-use collaboration tools that would enable employees to work from any office or from home, supporting the growing number of devices and increasing the value of the company's people, property and technology.

"One business goal was increasing employee engagement and improving work life balance," says Leon Benjamin, adoption lead for collaboration technologies at Virgin Media. "Another was reducing the time employees spent travelling, particularly for internal meetings, to free up more time for work as well as personal life."

Solution

After evaluating collaboration solutions from three vendors, Virgin Media selected Cisco, which was the only company offering social networking, web-based meetings and voice without the increased complexity of extra third party tools. "For us, collaboration is not just social networking, but also voice and video," says Benjamin. "Cisco brings all of these together in a cohesive, integrated platform."

Today, Virgin Media is transforming how work gets done. A Cisco® Unified Communications Manager foundation supports feature-rich IP telephony and a range of other Cisco solutions including WebEx Social, WebEx Meetings, TelePresence® and Show and Share.



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Colin Miles
Director IT Technical Services
Virgin Media

Collaboration across organisational boundaries

Virgin Media employees now collaborate with social networking, content creation, click-to-instant-message and click-to-call, all combined in Cisco WebEx Social. “It was important to gain top-down behaviour change during the pilot, however it was a groundswell of bottom-up energy that brought in company leaders and other employees,” says Miles.

Employees can join more than 130 WebEx Social communities to share and comment on documents, posts and recorded Cisco WebEx meetings – and all this is before a hard launch. Community sampling includes lessons learned, employee benefits and storytelling, where staff members share real customer experiences, both to inspire other teams and to get help. “People who have expertise in a particular process or technology can offer their insights,” Miles says. “They feel more engaged when they can see they’ve made a difference in a customer’s experience or the company’s success.”

WebEx Social also helps employees find co-workers who have a particular type of expertise anywhere in the organisation, and then just click to send an instant message or call. “The best way to transform a company is to create connections between people who previously did not interact,” says Miles. “Cisco WebEx Social has become a virtual water cooler where people can meet and get to know each other outside of a particular task. It’s amazing how people will go the extra mile for someone if they know a little more about each other.”

Travel reduction

Another way that Virgin Media is transforming the business is by enabling employees to meet remotely with high-definition video to reduce travel time and costs. With a click, employees now join Cisco WebEx Meetings sessions for internal meetings, training and recording of corporate communications. The uptake of Cisco WebEx Meetings by Virgin Media has been the fastest of any European company. More than 4,000 employees are active meeting hosts, and each month more than double that number join WebEx sessions, significantly reducing trips between offices. Employees can even join WebEx Meetings sessions from home or while travelling using personal smartphones and tablets, improving their work life balance.

In September 2012, Virgin Media used Cisco WebEx Meetings to conduct its biannual Senior Leadership Forum. For the first time, instead of taking a plane or train to a conference facility, the 120 participants joined the session by travelling to the nearest of six locations. “Not only did we reduce unproductive travel time, but we also decreased our carbon footprint,” says Miles. During the forum, which included high-definition video captured with a blend of roundtable and wide-angle cameras, executives brainstormed ways to increase the pace of innovation. After the forum, they continued the discussion in a private community on WebEx Social.

For high-level meetings that require an in-person experience, employees use Cisco TelePresence Systems in 16 major offices throughout the UK and the US. “High-definition video shows the other person’s facial expressions and emotions, improving the level of understanding and helping people feel more strongly connected,” Benjamin says. “However TelePresence is still a room-based resource. The combination of TelePresence with HD video through WebEx really opens up the power of collaboration to the whole company in real time,” adds Miles.



“Serendipitous interactions on Cisco WebEx Social create innovation, and make the organisation more joined up.”

Leon Benjamin

Adoption Lead for Collaboration Technologies
Virgin Media

Results

Business transformation

Virgin Media is transforming the business by making it easier to get work done. Prime examples include:

- **Accelerating responses to requests for proposal:** Sales teams will be able to complete bid responses faster by using Cisco WebEx Social collaboration instead of email. Less time spent on responses can translate to faster revenue realisation.
- **Enabling flexible working:** Employees can work from anywhere, lowering commuting costs and supporting Virgin Media’s commitment to environmental sustainability.
- **Making it easier to get work done:** A keyword search on Cisco WebEx Social retrieves documents, posts, and comments, and identifies people with related expertise in any office, avoiding project delays.
- **Removing duplication across the organisation:** Employees can view existing communities before deciding to create a new one.

Cisco Services provided design and implementation functions for Cisco WebEx Social, while the Cisco Business Transformation Team helped build the business case. “The degree of service, level of commitment and can-do attitude from the Cisco Services people made all the difference, both in our pilot and production deployments,” says Miles. “We were impressed with their speed, which helped us realise benefits sooner.”

Sharing knowledge across departments and locations

Among the biggest benefits of Cisco WebEx Social is bridging departmental boundaries to bring together people with common business objectives. An example is a community devoted to gathering all people involved in marketing activities for a specific product or group of customers. “These employees are scattered in different departments and locations, and bringing them together in a WebEx Social community helps us communicate to the customer with a common voice,” Benjamin says. “In our view, the most important contribution of IT is to enable conversations between people who did not previously know each other. Serendipitous interactions on Cisco WebEx Social create innovation, and make the organisation more joined up.”

WebEx Social is also helping Virgin Media capture and preserve information that was previously confined to the minds of long-time employees. For example, the company’s sophisticated fibre-optic network is the result of acquisitions, and certain technical details are known only to a handful of engineers. “Creating documentation is a laborious process that engineers shy away from,” says Miles. “We made knowledge sharing easier by setting up templates in WebEx Social and inviting engineers to describe processes in WebEx Meetings that we record and share. The feedback from engineers has been very positive.”

Strengthening employee engagement

Both Cisco WebEx Social and Cisco video collaboration solutions are increasing employee engagement, which Virgin Media believes contributes to innovation and employee retention. “In our biannual surveys, after we introduced WebEx Social, we saw the largest-ever increase in employee engagement for those people involved in the pilot,” Benjamin says. “Cisco WebEx Meetings has also increased engagement by letting employees see each other face-to-face.”

Cost savings

Travel and entertainment costs have dropped significantly as a result of WebEx Meetings, while employees can work part of the time from home or customer locations by using Cisco collaboration applications.



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Adoption Lead for Collaboration Technologies
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Freeing time for innovation

Employees estimate that they are saving about 15 minutes daily by finding people and resources more quickly while not having to travel to meetings. “Together, WebEx Social, WebEx Meetings and TelePresence are freeing up thousands of hours weekly that we can use to increase overall productivity, speed-up the rate of innovation and make our employees happier,” says Miles.

Employees prefer sharing and commenting on documents and posts in WebEx Social compared to email, because it preserves all related files and conversations in one place. “Email can spiral out of control, and people tend to set priorities based on their inbox contents instead of what’s important to the organisation,” Miles says. “WebEx Social eliminates time spent going back and forth between email threads. It’s all right there in the community or post.”

Virgin Media internal observations support social computing studies showing that when one person creates content, nine comment, another 90 view the content, and all 100 receive value. Benjamin says: “Cisco collaboration tools are making it easier to get work done, helping us continually become more agile and innovative.”

Next Steps

Now Virgin Media is preparing to integrate video into more business processes to further increase engagement and reduce travel costs. The company is also considering the introduction of a softphone client on mobile devices to reduce mobile costs and increase employee availability.

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco Collaboration visit: www.cisco.com/go/collaboration

To join conversations and share best practices about collaboration, please visit: www.cisco.com/go/joinconversation

Product List

Unified Communications

- [Cisco Unified Communications Manager](#)
- [Cisco Unified IP Phones](#)

Collaboration Applications

- [Cisco WebEx Social](#)
- [Cisco WebEx Meetings](#)
- [Cisco Video Capture, Transform, Share](#) (previously known as Cisco Show and Share)

TelePresence

- [Cisco TelePresence Systems](#) (CTS 1000, CTS 1300, CTS 3000, Profile 52, and e20 models)

Cisco Services

- [Planning, Design, and Implementation Services](#)



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