

Cisco Collaboration, more savings and efficiency for public health.

Case Study



The ASL (Local Public Health Service) in Bari has chosen Cisco to provide an integrated Unified Communications and Collaboration solution, reducing use and management costs and improving service quality to citizens' advantage.

SUMMARY

Customer Name: Azienda Sanitaria Locale (ASL) Bari

Industry: Public Administration - Healthcare

Location: Bari and province

Number of users: 6,000, distributed over approx. 190 centres

Challenge

- Increase efficiency and reduce costs deriving from different and separate IT infrastructures connecting four Health Services through a single communication infrastructure for a total of 190 ASL centres
- Reduce management time and costs and minimize red tape
- Create a single data, voice and video infrastructure, adaptable to future technology

Solution

- A Cisco Collaboration and Unified Communications solution

Results

- Savings of approx. 600,000 Euros per year in telephone costs, maximum flexibility in extending and modifying workstations, easy operation and single reference vendor
- Doctors and hospital staff reachable anywhere at the same number
- Platform adaptable to future technological developments, from wireless to TelePresence

Challenge

At a time of cuts in public spending, investments aimed at lowering costs and improving services represent the wisest choice for national health organisations and structures. A strategy profitably adopted by ASL Bari, now equipped with a Cisco solution that interconnects the numerous centres distributed across the territory, providing a technology platform for a Collaboration and Unified Communications architecture.

Born of the unification of four local health authorities brought about by the health-service rationalisation process started in 2006, ASL Bari has gathered under its jurisdiction 171 centres distributed over the Puglia territory, including first-aid points, healthcare facilities, offices and surgeries, in addition to the 18 major hospital complexes serving the citizenship. It has now become necessary to interconnect all pre-existing ASL infrastructures in a single Voice & Data network. This is no small feat, since each company had followed independent technological paths and chosen different products based on different WANs, using multiple service providers. A veritable "nightmare situation, whose complexity could only be unravelled through a complete makeover," according to Massimo Sciricchio, CTO of ASL Bari. The most difficult challenge lay in having to synthesize four different communication architectures and as many switchboards. The most difficult challenge lay in having to synthesize four different communication architectures and as many switchboards. "It was unthinkable not to centralize the infrastructure: maintaining separate lines would have caused an increase in operation and management costs, and would have thwarted the objectives addressed by the unification of these institutions," says Sciricchio. The approach had to be such as to guarantee growth and technological adjustment over time. "The new architecture needed to provide a scalable and flexible network that could be easily updated over time with new features and consequent bandwidth dimensioning."

The analysis phase, also attended by **Maurizio Stasolla**, CIO of ASL Bari, highlighted a series of requirements which led to the choice of a single vendor for all levels of network architecture: from WAN to data, voice and video communication devices, designed to support, at a later time, the most advanced Collaboration and TelePresence technology. Among the many projects examined in the initial stage, the choice fell on Cisco's, which integrated all the systems and services necessary to meet initial requirements.



“The move to Unified Communications saves us 600,000 Euros a year.”

Massimo Scirucchio
CTO, ASL Bari

“Apart from the solution’s reliability, what convinced us – from the very beginning – was the company’s cross-technology expertise,” says Stasolla. But that’s not all. Compared with previously signed contracts, the investment itself guaranteed a savings benefit. The prerequisites were all met.

Solution

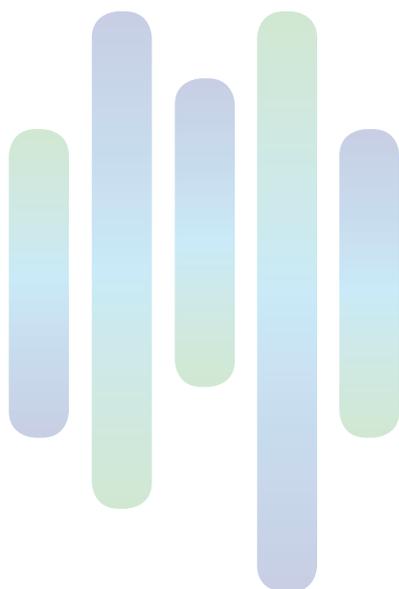
Cisco worked alongside Scirucchio and the IT Department of ASL Bari, developing and implementing the solution. The field-testing phase followed. “The first step involved the remaking of the entire geographic network,” explains Scirucchio, “in which all ASL centres were interconnected via a highly reliable and fully redundant WAN, based on Cisco routing devices.” From this platform LANs were set up, having newly installed structured cabling and Power Over Ethernet devices, powered by the network itself and therefore suitable for a consumption control strategy and consequent energy saving. Control and cost savings were secured by opting for Unified Communications, which enables users to exploit the data network for telephone calls. “Calls between the various centres, formerly managed by four different providers, were subject to long-distance rates. Now all our calls are internal to the network and therefore free of charge, because our centres are interconnected through the data network,” says Scirucchio.

The heart of the infrastructure consists of a Cisco Unified Communication Manager cluster: this software can handle voice, video and messaging traffic throughout the entire corporate network. The Cisco Unified Communication Manager also controls Cisco Unified IP Phones. “Cisco Unified IP Phones 7942 and 7962 offer an extensive range of functions,” explains **Graziano Leuzzi**, Cisco Account Manager, “including reachability through a single number; a single, centralized online directory; and, above all, extension mobility – the feature enabling doctors to use any IP phone in the network with their own username and password, and access their settings and data regardless of their whereabouts.” In some cases it was possible to use traditional analog phones by connecting them to the IP network with Cisco ATA 187 adapters, so as to continue to benefit from the previous technological investment. With this new IP infrastructure, employees of ASL Bari now have easy access to new resources. They can use Internet resources, e-mail, voice-mail and faxes from any workstation, as well as make and receive calls on a secure network regardless of which office they are based in.

Benefits

Voice over IP (VoIP) network integration, now nearing completion, has already borne fruit. “The move to Unified Communications saves us 600 thousand Euros a year,” says Scirucchio: a considerable figure, which brings to the fore the importance of information technology in supporting modern business.

The fact that such a complex scenario has been made manageable is already well worth the investment. According to Leuzzi, “They’re moving on from a complex situation in which it was hard to understand who to contact in an emergency. This allows network administrators greater liberty to focus on activities that are more profitable for the company”. Not to mention that, previously, merely adding or moving a single telephone involved the expense of calling in a technician, the re-configuration of the switchboard, and days of downtime before the matter was dealt with by the relevant provider. “Today all these operations can be carried out in a matter of minutes by in-house staff, thanks to the homogeneity of the entire solution,” highlights Scirucchio. This enables maximum configuration flexibility: telephone devices are considered part of the data network and can be managed like other connected components. “You can configure the switchboard itself according to the workload.



PRODUCT LIST

Hardware

- Cisco ISR G2 1900, 2900, and 3900 routers and voice gateways
- Cisco CP-7942 e CP-7962 IP Phones
- Cisco ATA Analog 187 Telephone Adapter
- Cisco Catalyst® 2960, 3750, 3560, 45xx

Software

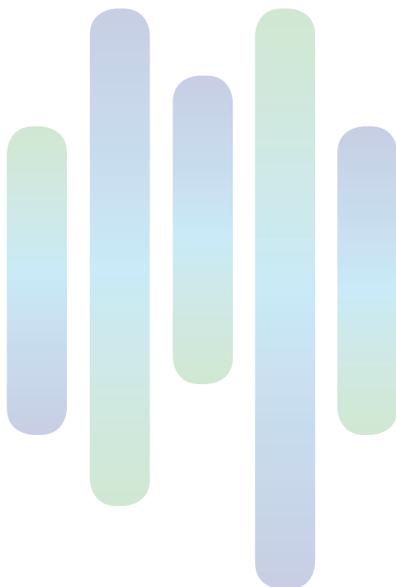
- Cisco Unified SRST software
- Cisco Call Manager software

The call is routed to free operators, and external callers don't have to hold the line for long," says Scirucchio. This level of flexibility enables the ASL to use telework employees to perform this function, and a system easily manageable through a web browser with analysis features, so now is much easier for the ASL to keep the telephone traffic under control and be fully aware of the costs to be attributed to the various departments.

Once this part will be up and running, ASL Bari intends to plan new services, improve the network using Cisco Wide Area Application Services (WAAS), adopt Cisco First™ Management for centralized management, and an advanced security system. The network of 18 hospital complexes will also be extended to include the wireless component for integrating mobile devices into the wards and, owing to the possibility of exploiting the network for videos, telemedicine services will be implemented. All this will further increase the value of the investment and will bring unparalleled benefits, concludes Scirucchio. *"We were impressed with Cisco's professionalism and brilliant team-work in building a network that is capable of supporting all our current services and those we will develop in the coming years."*

For More Information

Cisco Unified Communications & Collaboration Solution
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