Let ‘Em Have It

Why It’s Smart to Give Employees More Applications Access

“Anytime, anywhere” access to business applications by your employees is a tantalizing proposition. Here a few companies share five paths that they took to improve employee access, and the results:

1. Break Bottlenecks

Building supplier Mountain Lumber [http://www.cisco.com/en/US/prod/collateral/voicesw/ps6788/vcallcon/ps4625/prod_case_study0900aecd804ff270.html], which has 29 employees, had separate phone systems at each of its three sites. Phone lines were limited, employees couldn’t transfer incoming calls, and overhead paging served only the main office. Too often, customers were put on hold or landed in voicemail because employees could not locate salespeople.

The company asked AT-NET Services, a Cisco Premier Certified Partner, for a better solution. AT-NET recommended unified communications (integrated voice and data applications) built atop a secure wireless and wired network foundation.

Now that all Mountain Lumber communications travel over the same Internet Protocol (IP) network, employees respond to customers much faster, reports Sandra Simmons, owner. “We can transfer calls to any location, and can page people using the same phones we use for regular calls.” Another result of access to unified communications applications: Carrying a wireless IP phone, the lumber yard manager can quickly tell a salesperson if a product is in stock or a customer’s order has shipped.

2. Secure Access by Users

At PacificSource Health Plans ([LINK: http://www.cisco.com/en/US/prod/collateral/wireless/ps5678/ps6521/prod_case_study0900aecd80618153_ps6366_Products_Case_Study.html], security is a top priority. The 324-employee insurance provider must comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to protect patient records.

A big concern was employees traveling to the five remote offices. PacificSource had restricted their applications access to wired connections that required them to use detailed login procedures, which were printed on “cheat sheets” that could allow unauthorized access if they fell into the wrong hands.
The cure for PacificSource was integrating a wireless LAN on its secure network foundation, which eliminated cheat sheets. Now employees use automatic authentication, and have wireless mobility. PacificSource’s IT team can also easily grant contractors and guests secure applications access.

3. Increase Productivity

PacificSource’s pervasive and secure wireless access has raised productivity in these ways:

- Employees can get right to work, connecting instantly to the company’s sophisticated suite of software applications.
- Mobile employees, vendors, and visitors, as well as people working in conference rooms, have access to business applications.
- IT staff manage the entire network from a central point, saving time and strengthening security.

4. Cut Costs

Everything Tradeshows [LINK: http://www.cisco.com/en/US/prod/collateral/voicesw/ps6788/vcallcon/ps7293/prod_case_study0900aecd806aba76.pdf], a tradeshow service provider with nine employees, saves time and money by having its secure network foundation provide unified communications. The applications used by employees include integrated voicemail and email, one-click dialing with Microsoft Outlook, and an automated attendant that answers incoming calls.

Further savings: “We can manage the system over the network, which means Everything Tradeshows doesn’t pay for travel time and onsite technician time,” says T.J. Spohn, vice president, CPT of South Florida. CPT is the Cisco Certified Partner that set up and supports the system. Phone moves, adds, and changes are especially fast and inexpensive. CPT can make them remotely in 15 minutes, saving $175 per phone.

5. Raise Sales and Boost Brand

To dial prospects, Everything Tradeshows employees click numbers on their computer screen. This application alone multiplies the number of telemarketing calls made within a four-hour period by 500%. Sales leads have increased proportionately, says Chris Chase, managing partner.

Having access to more applications can also enhance your company’s brand image. Example: The automated attendant feature on Everything Tradeshows’ system lets callers choose which department they want. “This gives (Everything
Tradeshows) the feel of a much larger company, which helps attract larger customers,” says Spoon.

Next Steps


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