



CNG UNICOM'S CISCO SOLUTIONS PROVIDE NEW CONNECTIVITY FOR PLATFORM COMPUTING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CNG UNICOM

- Cisco® Silver Certified Partner

Advanced Cisco Specializations:

- Unified Communications
- Wireless LAN
- Security

PLATFORM COMPUTING

Head Office: Toronto

Employees: approximately 500

Other Locations: 15 offices across North America, Asia Pacific and Europe

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Upgrade older telephony equipment to create a user-friendly environment for employees
- Reduce conferencing costs

BUSINESS SOLUTION

- Deployed a Cisco Unified Communications network featuring Cisco Unified MeetingPlace, Cisco Unified CallManager and more

BUSINESS RESULTS

- Increased employees' productivity, cut conferencing costs and simplified communication across the Toronto office

Business Challenge

Platform Computing provides software that dynamically connects IT resources to workload demand according to business policies. Platform's customers use their solutions to improve IT productivity and reduce enterprise data centre costs. A pioneer and the global leader in High Performance Computing (HPC) management software, Platform is the largest independent vendor of HPC management software with over 2,000 customers worldwide. Based in Toronto, the company has 15 offices across North America, Asia Pacific and Europe.

The company relied on an older, mixed voice environment in its Toronto headquarters and its PBX was nearly 10 years old. As employees became more mobile and telephony needs increased, Platform knew it was time for a change.

"The telephone environment we had was basic," says Ahmed Shariff, IT Director, Enterprise Infrastructure at Platform Computing. "As we moved forward with an upgrade, there were really two things we were interested in doing: saving on costs

— especially with our conferencing — and ensuring employees could be more productive."

Platform didn't have a contact centre and instead, customers would select from a voice menu to have their calls directed. This created a very static environment, Shariff explains.

"We wanted to have a contact centre where agents could be anywhere in the world and could log into the queue and take a call. As well, our existing system was not very user friendly for our mobile workforce. They would call a toll-free number to check their voicemail if they were on the road in a hotel, for example."

The company took all this into account and came up with some objectives and functionality requirements for the system. However, Shariff planned for a phased process, as the company didn't have a hard deadline for a new implementation. "This was a new adventure for us – a completely new environment – and we didn't want to rush and make a decision. When we went live it had to be for the right reason, so we really wanted to make sure we were ready."

Business Solution

With its needs outlined, the company knew it wanted to move to Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) technology and implement a unified communications system. It began investigating its options with a variety of vendors including CNG Unicom, an IT solution provider focused on Cisco Unified Communications. As Platform's preferred Cisco reseller for almost seven years, the two companies already had a stellar relationship along with a high level of trust. CNG Unicom and Cisco met with Platform to discuss the solutions they could provide to meet the requirements.

"IT is becoming increasingly complex and our commitment to stay ahead of the technology curve in our core areas of expertise has enabled us to develop a trusted advisor role with our customers."

Paul Reynolds, President, CNG Unicom

"When we saw what they had to offer, the decision was made quickly. They had everything we needed; CNG Unicom's Cisco solutions solved each of our issues," he says. "Due to our prior relationship we knew that CNG Unicom's staff goes above and beyond to ensure customer satisfaction. We were confident that by selecting CNG Unicom's Cisco solutions we would be able to take a giant leap towards simplifying and improving our communications infrastructure."

Part of CNG Unicom's philosophy as a consultative solution provider is to understand that delivering technical expertise to customers is not enough.

"Since 1991, we've had a commitment to exceptional customer service, knowing it must go hand in hand with our technical knowledge," says Paul Reynolds, President, CNG Unicom. "We dedicate ourselves to listening to our customers so we can truly understand their businesses and goals. IT is becoming increasingly complex and our commitment to stay ahead of the technology curve in our core areas of expertise has enabled us to develop a trusted advisor role with our customers."

A new communication platform

The CNG Unicom staff provided an assessment and determined the best Cisco solutions to bring the company state-of-the-art conferencing technology and simplified communications, allowing employees access from anywhere.

As part of the Cisco Unified Communications solution, CNG Unicom included Cisco Unified Communications Manager, an IP-based call processing system, to replace the existing PBX. Unified communications solutions from Cisco allow employees to get connected with instant messaging, videoconferencing, phone calls and more with just one click — making collaboration faster and simpler. What's more, employees can remain productive and access their messages regardless of their location.

Cisco's Unified Presence Server (CUPS) was integrated to simplify communication for the sales team and other remote workers. CUPS aggregates presence information from the network, Cisco Unified CallManager and more and then displays the information to Cisco Unified IP Phones, Cisco Unified Personal Communicator, and third-party services and applications. As well, Cisco Unity Connection 7.0 was included to give employees more freedom and the ability to customize message notification options.

To help with Platform's conferencing needs and reduce costs, CNG Unicom implemented Cisco Unified MeetingPlace, a solution that integrates voice, video, and web conferencing. With a single click, a user can schedule or launch voice, video, and Web conferences through a Web interface, touch-tone and Cisco Unified IP phones and other applications such as Microsoft Outlook.

Finally, to modernize and better equip the call centre, Cisco Unified Contact Center Express was selected to keep Platform employees always connected and able to log into the queue easily, no matter their location in the world. As well, using Unified Contact Center Express provided Platform's management team with new capabilities to better manage staff, including generating reports to monitor workloads and measure results. Managers can now also look into the queue to see who is logged in, how long an agent has been logged off and more.

Results

Just a few weeks after going live with the new solution, Shariff says the impact was seen almost instantly.

“Over a period of five years, the money we will save on conferencing costs will pay for approximately 90 per cent of the solution.”

**Ahmed Shariff, IT Director, Enterprise Infrastructure,
Platform Computing**

“We already know our employees' productivity has increased, which is usually a difficult thing to measure,” he says. “For example, on a day when the weather is bad we can have a call centre agent log into the queue from home.”

Remote workers and people who are travelling are easily accessible and can work from anywhere though Cisco Unified Presence, which provides them with a phone and complete message centre right on their computer. Employees have the ability to log on to make a call, check their voicemail, look at their contacts to see who is online and more — all in one application.

“That's powerful for anyone on the go,” Shariff says.

Cisco Unified MeetingPlace has also proven to be effective as the cost of paying a third-party for conferencing has been eliminated — a big deal for a company that uses conferencing extensively both internally and with customers and partners.

“We did an internal analysis of the conferencing system, even taking into account we may have to increase our number of PSTN connections,” Shariff says. “We concluded over a period of five years, the money we will save on conferencing costs will pay for approximately 90 per cent of the solution. You can't beat that.”

The reaction from employees has been very positive, he says. “It makes their jobs much easier in terms of communicating with other departments and customers. They’re also able to be more self-sufficient as they don’t need to call IT with issues such as a password reset – they can now do it themselves.”

The transition itself was completely seamless, he adds, explaining there was absolutely no interruption to the staff or the business.

“We took a lot of time to plan ahead with this most recent project, and we’ll do the same down the road. With the benefits we’ve seen and the money we know we’re saving, the goal is to make this a company-wide initiative.”

PRODUCT LIST

Equipment and Applications

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager 6.1
- Cisco Unified Presence Server
- Cisco Unity Connection 7.0
- Cisco Unified MeetingPlace
- Cisco Unified CallManager
- Cisco Unified Contact Center Express 5.0
- Cisco 7975 and 7945 Unified IP Phones
- Cisco Unity Integrated Messaging
- Cisco Unified Workplace Licensing
- Cisco ASA 5520 Appliances
- Cisco SMARTnet

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about Cisco Unified Communications, go to:

<http://www.cisco.com/go/voice>.

To find out more about CNG Unicom solutions, go to:

<http://www.cngsolutions.com>



Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
San Jose, CA

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems (USA) Pte. Ltd.
Singapore

Europe Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Cisco has more than 200 offices worldwide. Addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers are listed on the Cisco Website at www.cisco.com/go/offices.

CCDE, CCENT, Cisco Eos, Cisco Lumin, Cisco Nexus, Cisco StadiumVision, Cisco TelePresence, Cisco WebEx, the Cisco logo, DCE, and Welcome to the Human Network are trademarks; Changing the Way We Work, Live, Play, and Learn and Cisco Store are service marks; and Access Registrar, Aironet, AsyncOS, Bringing the Meeting To You, Catalyst, CCDA, CCDP, CCE, CCIP, CCNA, CCNP, CCSP, CCVP, Cisco, the Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert logo, Cisco IOS, Cisco Press, Cisco Systems, Cisco Systems Capital, the Cisco Systems logo, Cisco Unity, Collaboration Without Limitation, EtherFast, EtherSwitch, Event Center, Fast Step, Follow Me Browsing, FormShare, GigaDrive, HomeLink, Internet Quotient, IOS, iPhone, iQuickStudy, IronPort, the IronPort logo, LightStream, Linksys, MediaTone, MeetingPlace, MeetingPlace Chime Sound, MGX, Networkers, Networking Academy, Network Registrar, PCNow, PIX, PowerPanels, ProConnect, ScriptShare, SenderBase, SMARTnet, Spectrum Expert, StackWise, The Fastest Way to Increase Your Internet Quotient, TransPath, WebEx, and the WebEx logo are registered trademarks of Cisco Systems, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and certain other countries.

All other trademarks mentioned in this document or website are the property of their respective owners. The use of the word partner does not imply a partnership relationship between Cisco and any other company. (0809R)