

Financial Services Company Accelerates Telework

SNS REAAL uses Cisco Wide Area Application Services Mobile to accelerate application performance for teleworkers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
SNS REAAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Services Utrecht, Netherlands 7400 Employees
Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve work-life balance Increase business continuity Minimize real estate costs
Solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabled telework by giving employees laptops with Cisco Wide Area Application Services (WAAS) Mobile software
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to six times faster application response times Ten times faster access to centralized files Office space requirements reduced by 30 percent



Challenge

Headquartered in Utrecht, the Netherlands, SNS REAAL is an innovative service provider in the banking and insurance sector, focusing primarily on the Dutch retail market and small and medium-sized enterprises. The

company's three main products are mortgages and property finance, savings and investments, and insurance.

One of the SNS REAAL's main values is making a positive impact on society and the environment. Therefore, company leaders decided to give employees the tools to work from home one or two days each week. Employees would appreciate eliminating commute time on those days, freeing time for family and other activities. The company would benefit by reducing office-space requirements and enabling employees to continue working if weather or disaster kept them from traveling to the office. And the community would benefit from lower greenhouse gas emissions.

"To adopt telework, SNS REAAL needed a way to deliver the same application experience to employees' homes as they would have in the office," says Gijs Janssen, network consultant for SNS REAAL. Most employees have relatively slow cable and asymmetric DSL (ADSL) connections, which do not deliver acceptable performance for today's bandwidth-intensive applications. At first the company considered providing thin clients to employees, to minimize the amount of data that would travel between the data center and employees' homes. But thin clients currently do not support good-quality audio and video conferencing, an important part of the company's telework strategy.

Therefore, SNS REAAL decided to provide laptops to employees and find a solution that would both help ensure telework productivity with fast application performance and optimize the bandwidth of employees' home broadband connections.

Solution

SNS REAAL found its solution in Cisco® Virtual Office and Cisco Wide Area Application Services (WAAS) Mobile. “In our tests, data transfers were four to six times faster with Cisco WAAS Mobile,” Janssen says.

The company implemented Cisco WAAS Mobile Server in its two data centers in the Netherlands, which operate in an active-standby configuration. During the pilot deployment, the company purchased 100 Cisco WAAS Mobile Concurrent User Licenses and initially installed Cisco WAAS Mobile software on 100 laptops. Employees work from home using the Cisco Virtual Office solution, which includes a Cisco 800 Series Integrated Services Router (ISR) with 802.11 wireless connectivity and an IP phone. After the pilot, the company began adding additional employee telework groups of 100 to 200. Currently 800 employees take advantage of Virtual Office and WAAS Mobile to work productively from home.

Results

High Productivity for Teleworkers

Cisco WAAS Mobile is accelerating all application traffic by an average of 8.19 times by dramatically compressing traffic, producing fewer WAN round trips, which in effect accelerates application performance. By protocol, the compression ratios are:

- Server Message Block (SMB): 15.8
- HTTP: 2.6
- Messaging Application Programming Interface (MAPI): 3.0
- HTTPS: 1.17

“Overall, application performance is seven to eight times faster with Cisco WAAS Mobile,” Janssen says, “and file sharing is ten times faster.” Even if an employee’s family members use the connection to download music or video files, application performance remains high, because the Cisco Virtual Office solution assigns priority to business traffic.

High Job Satisfaction

Telework contributes to job satisfaction. This helps SNS REAAL attract and retain top talent while reducing recruiting and training costs.

Reduced Real Estate Cost Savings

Employees work from home different days of the week, so they can share office space. With only 500 of 7400 employees currently teleworking, the company has already been able to close one small building.

And when all employees have the option to telework, SNS REAAL anticipates needing only 70 percent of its current office space.

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— Gijs Janssen, Network Consultant, SNS REAAL

Next Steps

SNS REAAL is gradually introducing Cisco WAAS Mobile to all 7400 employees, and expects 2000 users by the end of 2011. The company is also investigating the use of Cisco WAAS to optimize WAN connections between offices.

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Wide Area Application Services, visit:

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

PRODUCT LIST

- Cisco Wide Area Application Services (WAAS) Mobile
- Cisco Virtual Office
 - Cisco 800 Series Integrated Services Router (ISR)
 - Cisco ASR 1000 Series Aggregation Services Routers (ASR)



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