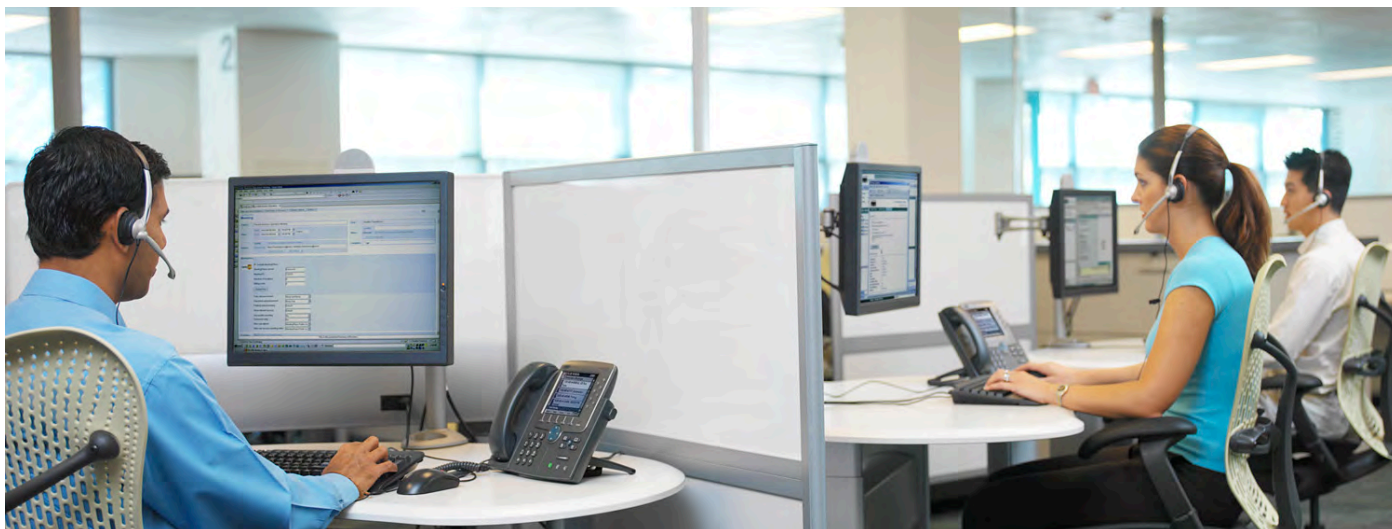


Aligning Technology with Business Process



U.K. energy contractor reduces total cost of ownership while improving customer service and adopting new ways of working

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Robert Heath Heating

Industry: Heating and energy services

Location: United Kingdom

Number of Employees: 295

Challenge

- Improve customer service, while driving down costs
- Establish better, faster ways of working

Solution

- Cisco Unified Communications applications for optimizing contact center operations, staff productivity, and customer experience
- Cisco Borderless Network infrastructure with Cisco IronPort Security

Results

- Moved to 24-hour customer service, while reducing total cost of ownership by 40 percent, including savings of 75 percent on ICT administration and 50 percent on calls
- Key performance indicators for managing future business improvement
- New joint venture and business diversification as service provider

Challenge

Robert Heath Heating maintains over 100,000 properties for some 30 landlords, including housing associations and local authorities. Since its formation in 1979, it has become one of the leading independent U.K. gas heating contractors, working in the commercial and industrial sectors in addition to its domestic contracts. Among 295 employees, spread across four U.K. locations, are 180 engineers on-call to deal with heating problems. Customers in need of help ring the company's service center, where up to 25 agents deal with around 1500 calls a day.

Efficient communication is vital, particularly when dealing with emergency situations, but the company was suffering from constant network failures. "We had a legacy contact center located at a single fixed base, and numerous different types of network equipment, which were just not meeting our performance or reliability requirements," says Kristian Ellmore, newly-appointed ICT director at Robert Heath Heating. "With at least three network outages a day, this was seriously affecting the business." Those failures meant the company continually had to increase its ICT overhead just to maintain its 24-hour emergency call-out service.

Email was another issue. "We get about one million emails daily and, although our anti-spam software was filtering out 90 percent of the bad content, thousands were still getting through, which was a big drain on staff productivity," says Ellmore. "Equally, there was a significant risk that valuable emails, like sales leads and customer requests, were being blocked."

Furthermore, inability to measure key performance indicators meant Robert Heath Heating was unable to plan service improvements. For example, it could not record calls or monitor agent performance. And, with no wallboards, the company did not know how long callers had been queuing. When a customer satisfaction survey showed that waiting times were unacceptable, it was clear that something had to be done. "We needed to upgrade from our fragmented infrastructure to a next-generation communication system," says Ellmore.



“Since implementing our Cisco network and applications, the whole dynamic of the company has changed. People are working in different ways. Things are being done faster and on time. It’s been an absolute transformation.”

Kristian Elmore
ICT Director
Robert Heath Heating

Solution

Working with Manor IT Sales and Solutions, Robert Heath Heating chose a holistic solution based on Cisco® Borderless Network architecture. The core foundation comprises three Cisco 2900 Series Integrated Services Routers supporting session initiation protocol (SIP) trunking and ISDN traffic, along with one Cisco 1900 Series Integrated Services Router. In the local area, eight fully managed Cisco Catalyst® 3750G Series Switches feature Power over Ethernet technologies permitting controlled energy usage and a reduction in the amount of structured cabling.

Two Cisco ASA5512-X Adaptive Security Appliances provide fixed VPN terminations to satellite offices, while the addition of Cisco AnyConnect® licensing provides a flexible and cost effective way of extending VPN access, in particular to mobile devices, in turn helping make remote workers more efficient and productive.

Further security is provided by Cisco IronPort® Web Security Appliance and Email Security Appliance, which combine to deliver URL, reputation, and malware filtering to combat potential security threats. “Built using open standards, the Cisco Borderless Network was installed in just six weeks with no disruption to operations,” says Ellmore. “More importantly, it gave us a platform for transforming our business through the introduction of new Cisco applications.”

For example, Cisco Unified Contact Center Express (UCCX), augmented with Cisco Unified IP Phones and IP Softphones, has boosted customer interaction management. Communication is further streamlined with Cisco Unified Presence and Jabber® instant messaging. Jabber has been integrated with Cisco WebEx® Meetings and is also used with Cisco Media Services Interface to make point-to-point video calls. Cisco Unity Connection extends regular voicemail by allowing access via multiple methods such as browser, Cisco Jabber, and Cisco Jabber for Mobile. The addition of Cisco SpeechView allows staff to convert voice messages to text and email, while Cisco Unified Workforce Optimization helps staff take immediate action, plan evaluations, and make adjustments to improve contact center team performance.

To further protect and get the best out of its ICT investment, the company opted for Cisco SMARTnet®, an award-winning technical support service that provides the Robert Heath Heating ICT team with direct, anytime access to Cisco experts and online resources.

Results

Robert Heath Heating has not experienced a single failure in the 12 months since implementing its Cisco Borderless Network, while customer service has seen significant improvements. “Once the new Cisco UCCX system went live and the wallboards went up, we suddenly had visibility of service levels and quickly acted on these new insights,” says Ellmore. “Also, we have moved to a 24x7x365 operation while actually seeing ICT administrative overheads reduce by 75 percent. Furthermore, the ICT team has changed from a reactive stance to being totally proactive, able to drive the operation and deliver business value.”

That business value goes much deeper. “Since implementing our Cisco network and applications, the whole dynamic of the company has changed,” says Ellmore. “People are working in different ways. Things are being done faster and on time. It’s been an absolute transformation.” With the new reporting tools that the system provides, the company can now help ensure that it has staff in the right place, at the right time, to deliver a much better service.

“Robert Heath Heating has always wanted to lead and has always believed that ICT was the way to do it. The problem was that we could not find the right partner. The list of requirements was long, and Cisco was the only supplier able to meet them all.”

Kristian Ellmore
ICT Director
Robert Heath Heating

“Those efficiency gains alone will recoup 50 percent of our investment,” says Ellmore. “Customers get speedier responses, because agents can use Cisco Presence to send an instant message to the technical team and get the answers they need there and then.” Productivity is further improved by virtual contact center functionality that allows agents to use their laptops to answer calls and access tools and information from home. Customer service is underpinned by Cisco Workforce Optimization, which closely monitors quality and acts as an early warning system should call handling start to flag and dip below pre-defined standards.

Cisco Jabber Instant Messaging has helped to create a more mobile workplace where people are no longer tied to desks. Instead they can forward calls to other phone extensions or personal devices as part of a bring-your-own-device ethos. Cisco Presence improves productivity by allowing sound judgments to be made as to the best way to communicate. For example, by sending an IM if that person is on the phone, or sending an email or leaving a voice message if they are away from their desk.

“We have also integrated WebEx Meetings with Jabber,” says Ellmore. “This is another feature that is really saving time and money. For example, our HR manager in Surrey recently sorted out a problem at our Leeds office without having to make the 400-mile round trip. Everything was resolved with a WebEx session launched direct from Jabber, enabling document and workspace sharing.”

Email communication is much more effective and less burdensome. Since the introduction of the new Cisco IronPort Email Security solution, there has not been a single instance of a legitimate email being blocked by the system. Thanks to the Cisco IronPort Web Security Appliance, the IT team can now track and enforce web-browsing policy. For example, people are now allowed 45 minutes per shift for personal browsing within pre-agreed sites.

“Cisco Unified Communications Manager and Cisco Unified Border Element have also allowed us to quickly set up SIP trunks and deliver a straight 50 percent saving on calls. Return on investment for this alone would pay for the entire system within a five-year period,” says Ellmore. “That means we can scale telephony requirements to meet the needs of the business within minutes not weeks compared to traditional telephony. Over and above its technology, one thing that stands out is the outstanding technical support offered by Cisco, which is always prompt and effective.”

Robert Heath Heating is so impressed with its Cisco experience that it has launched Robert Heath Technology, a joint venture with Manor IT Sales and Solutions that aims to pass on the benefits of Cisco technology to its customers. “We are already talking to two housing associations about using Cisco Unified Communications,” says Ellmore. “Robert Heath Heating has always wanted to lead and has always believed that ICT was the way to do it. The problem was that we could not find the right partner. The list of requirements was long, and Cisco was the only supplier able to meet them all.”

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco solutions featured within this case study, go to:

www.cisco.com/go/borderless

www.cisco.com/go/collaboration



Product And Services List

Routing and Switching

- Cisco 1900 and 2900 Series Integrated Services Routers
- Cisco Catalyst 3750G Series Switches

Unified Communications

- Cisco Unified Contact Centre Express
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unity Connection
- Cisco Unified Border Element
- Cisco Unified IP Phones and IP Softphones
- Cisco Presence
- Cisco Jabber
- Cisco Media Services Interface
- Cisco WebEx Meetings
- Cisco Workforce Optimization
- Cisco Quality Management
- Cisco SpeechView

Security

- Cisco ASA5512-X Adaptive Security Appliance
- Cisco S170 IronPort Web Security Appliance
- Cisco C170 IronPort Email Security Appliance

Support

- Cisco SMARTnet services



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