

Global Company Transforms Culture with Cloud-Based Collaboration



D+M Group connected organizational siloes using Hosted Collaboration Solution and managed TelePresence service.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: D+M Group
Industry: Consumer Electronics
Location: Headquarters in Mahwah, New Jersey
Number of Employees: 2000 Employees

CHALLENGE

- Increase operational efficiency
- Promote innovation by fostering collaboration
- Lower communications total cost of ownership

SOLUTION

- Adopted common cloud collaboration platform for all divisions, with Cisco Hosted Collaboration Solution (HCS) delivered by West IP Communications
- Helped enable in-person communications experience with managed Cisco TelePresence service

RESULTS

- Bridged organizational silos and made it easier to collaborate from any global location
- Accelerated decision-making by helping enable more people to engage, without travel
- Lowered three-year total cost of ownership for communications at headquarters by 72 percent

Challenge

D+M Group is a global company dedicated to enhancing life through inspired sound solutions delivered anytime, anywhere. Serving the consumer, professional, and automotive markets, D+M Group brands include Allen & Heath, Boston Acoustics, Calrec Audio, Denon, Denon DJ, Denon Professional, Marantz, Marantz Professional, McIntosh Laboratory, and Premium Sound Solutions. The company employs approximately 2000 people worldwide and markets its products and services in more than 45 countries.

Until 2010, D+M operated as a holding company for brands that functioned as autonomous businesses. "To gain economies of scale, the corporate office decided to become more involved in each brand's day-to-day operations," says John Jackson, vice president of global infrastructure and vendor management for D+M Group. "Teamwork is a central corporate value, and our CEO wanted to break down barriers between brands to encourage collaboration and innovation."

To bring its consumer, professional, and automotive divisions together, D+M Group began offering shared services, including communications and collaboration. "When every division had its own communications system, there was no tie to bind them together," says Jackson. "Making it easy for people to collaborate across divisional and geographical boundaries would help D+M Group function as an efficient, single entity."

Jackson asked himself what type of communications system he would invest in if starting a brand-new company. The answer: a cloud service. “Our goal was to gain advanced communications and collaboration capabilities without a large, up-front investment,” he says. “We are moving many of our services to private or public clouds, and a hosted communications service seemed like a natural fit.”

Solution

D+M Group is meeting its goals with Cisco® Hosted Collaboration Solution (HCS), a managed Cisco TelePresence® service, and Cisco WebEx® Meetings.

Cloud-Based Communications

To provide a common collaboration platform for all employees, D+M Group chose Cisco HCS from West IP Communications, a Cisco cloud provider partner. West IP Communications delivers Cisco HCS as a turnkey service, ordering and installing Cisco Unified IP Phones, training employees to use features such as Cisco Unity® Unified Messaging, and providing weekly usage reports. D+M Group pays a per-person fee for basic communications services and for Cisco HCS for Contact Center.

“With Cisco HCS, we can take advantage of unified communications without the expense of hiring or training specialists to support the hardware and software,” Jackson says. “West IP Communications’ project management is very solid, and they operate as an extension of my team.” And because the software is hosted in the cloud, it is always up-to-date, giving employees the latest capabilities without any effort from D+M Group’s IT team.

D+M Group is moving its offices to Cisco HCS one by one, starting with the sites that will save the most by eliminating capital and maintenance costs. The first site went live within weeks, and now approximately 400 employees in four offices in North America and Europe receive communications services through Cisco HCS. The offices connect to each other over an internal Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) network, and to West IP Communications over redundant DS-3 lines, for high availability.

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For sites that can least afford telephony downtime, D+M Group created a backup for Cisco HCS by using Cisco Unified Survivable Remote Site Telephony (SRST), a cloud connector, on each site’s Cisco Integrated Services Router (ISR). If a site loses its connection to the cloud, Cisco Unified SRST automatically takes over the main functions of Cisco HCS, helping to make sure that employees can continue to make and receive calls without interruption. When the WAN link is restored, phones automatically connect to Cisco HCS again with no effort from the IT team. “Cisco Unified SRST gave us the confidence that our telephony services would remain reliable once we moved to the cloud,” Jackson says. “This helped us sell Cisco HCS internally.”

In-Person Interactions over the Network

D+M Group also uses a cloud-based service for Cisco TelePresence. Employees in seven global sites on three continents can meet with an in-person experience using Cisco TelePresence Systems in conference rooms and executive offices. “We don’t own the equipment, and we don’t support it, and yet we have the full benefit of Cisco TelePresence for travel avoidance and better team collaboration,” Jackson says. The company is finding new ways to take advantage of Cisco TelePresence, including job interviews. “Our CEO wants to hire top talent regardless of location, and recently interviewed a job candidate in Japan using Cisco TelePresence,” says Debra Capua, senior communications manager, D+M Group.

Web Collaboration with Customers

The company’s European offices use the Cisco WebEx Meetings cloud service for customer presentations combining voice, high-definition video, and web-sharing conferences. “For our European and Asia Pacific offices, performance is much better with Cisco WebEx than other web-conferencing solutions because WebEx cloud is local,” Jackson says. “The traffic doesn’t have to flow all the way to the U.S. and back again.”

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— Debra Capua, Senior Communications Manager, D+M Group

Results

Optimized Team Performance in a Global Enterprise

Now that employees in all three divisions use the same communications technology, they can more easily engage with their coworkers and partners, with four-digit dialing and Cisco TelePresence. “Better teamwork and collaboration support our go-to-market business strategy and help us be more creative in developing products,” says Capua. In fact, the ease of collaborating across divisions helped D+M Group reorganize to make better use of talent scattered across different divisions. Instead of reporting to the head of a brand, managers now report to the head of a market (consumer, professional, or OEM) and a region (North America, Europe, or Japan).

“Having people on the same communications system is amazing,” says Capua. “It’s changing the company culture by creating a global mindset. For the first time, employees feel like they are a part of a larger company, and not just their brand.”

Accelerated Decision Making

Product launches are faster now, thanks to Cisco HCS and the managed Cisco TelePresence service. For example, instead of emailing product photos before a meeting and discussing them in audio conferences, product managers join Cisco TelePresence sessions to demonstrate product innovations as they discuss them, accelerating decision making. “It’s incredibly important to release consumer electronics in time for the holiday gift-giving season,” says Jackson. “We’ve increased our competitive advantage by making it easier to reach employees in other offices and not having to fly people around the world.”

Collaborating over the network with an in-person experience also helps enable the company to engage more people in product planning, fostering innovation. For example, engineers in one country who are working on a new headset design can more easily collaborate with their peers in other countries to make sure the headset also works well with other D+M Group brands.

Employees especially appreciate the in-person Cisco TelePresence experience when collaborating with coworkers who do not natively speak the same language. "Video is invaluable, because seeing facial expressions helps you see whether the other person understands you," says Jackson.

Lower TCO for Communications and Contact Center

In D+M Group's Mahwah, New Jersey headquarters, Cisco HCS has lowered three-year total cost of ownership (TCO) for communications by 72 percent. TCO factors include hardware and software, support, maintenance, and consolidation of connections to the service provider. Other sites are experiencing savings of 40-50 percent.

PRODUCT AND SERVICES LIST

Cisco Unified Communications

- [Cisco Hosted Collaboration Solution](#)
- [Cisco Unified IP Phones \(7925G, 7937G, 7942G, 7965G\)](#)

TelePresence

- [Cisco TelePresence EX90 Systems and C-Series Codecs](#)

Collaboration Applications

- [Cisco Unity Connection](#)
- [Cisco WebEx Meetings](#)
- [Cisco Unity Unified Messaging](#)

TCO for the 25-agent contact center has also decreased. Using Cisco HCS for Contact Center means that D+M Group no longer needs to purchase and manage contact center software and servers. "And we no longer need to pay for extra PRI [private rate interface] lines during the busy holiday season, because we pay a flat per-agent fee," Jackson says. The cloud service also gives the company the flexibility to add agents in any location.

Travel avoidance creates still more savings. Jackson, for example, now joins Cisco TelePresence sessions instead of flying to Japan four times annually at a cost of approximately US\$12,000 per trip.

Next Steps

D+M Group continues to move sites to the cloud through Cisco HCS, as equipment leases expire.

Freed from having to manage communications servers and software, the IT team is using its newfound agility to empower the mobile workforce to collaborate from anywhere, with any device. One idea is helping enable employees to join Cisco TelePresence sessions from tablets or laptops, using Cisco Jabber™ Video for TelePresence.

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco Collaboration, visit: <http://www.cisco.com/go/collaboration>.

To join conversations and share best practices about collaboration, visit: <http://www.cisco.com/go/joinconversation>.



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