

# Produce Distributor Improves Internal Communications

Kettle Produce implemented Business Edition 3000 to unify two locations and make it easier to reach mobile employees.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kettle Produce, Ltd.  
Vegetable Production  
Fife, Scotland  
750 Full-Time Employees

### CHALLENGE

- Improve organizational communications across two sites
- Increase customer satisfaction
- Simplify IT management

### SOLUTION

- Replaced separate phone systems at two sites with Cisco Business Edition 3000
- Used Unified Mobility feature to send calls to sales representatives' mobile phones

### RESULTS

- Made it easier to reach employees in either company location or in the field
- Helped prevent revenue loss from over- or under-producing vegetable packs
- Eliminated fees and delays for telephone extension moves, adds, and changes

## Challenge

Created in the 1970s by two farming families, Kettle Produce Ltd. is today one of the United Kingdom's largest suppliers of fresh vegetables to major supermarkets and retailers. The company has 750 full-time employees and up to 400 temporary employees during busy seasons. Kettle Produce operates from two production facilities three miles apart, in Fife, Scotland.

The company needed a better way to communicate between its two sites. "In fresh vegetable production, speed is of the essence," says Alan Berry, IS manager for Kettle Produce. "If a customer changes an order and we can't get in touch with the relevant production staff, we'll either over make or under make the order. Either way costs us money."

Previously, the company had separate, aging phone systems at each site. To reach coworkers at the other site, employees potentially had to call the main number and wait while someone put on protective clothing to enter the production area and look for the person required. Cell phones were not always a reliable option because of poor reception.

"We had upgraded our email system, but for urgent communications, there's no substitute for a reliable voice system," says Berry.

"If there's a problem with the phones at the other site, we no longer have to drive over, put on protective clothing, and have a look. We can control everything from a central administration portal."

— Alan Berry, IS Manager, Kettle Produce, Ltd.

## Solution

Kettle Produce found a solution for efficient organizational communications in Cisco® Business Edition 3000, a value-priced IP telephony system designed for medium-sized businesses. Kettle only needed one appliance, because up to 10 locations can connect to it over the network. "Business Edition 3000 has the features we need, is easy to set up and use, a long expected life, and lets employees move their phones to a new office without us having to re-wire," says Berry.

Local Cisco partner IPcell worked with the Kettle IT team to make sure that the shift from the old phone system to Cisco Business Edition 3000 went smoothly and did not disrupt business. Beforehand, Kettle gave IPcell a list of employees and their extensions. Once the Cisco Unified IP phones arrived, IPcell took the system live in less than three days. "We made sure the extensions were correct and that every phone had the proper settings, and then just turned it on," says Iain Howard, infrastructure manager for Kettle Produce.

"I no longer have to think about whether someone is in the office or on the road, because I can reach them wherever they are by dialing their office extension."

— Iain Howard, Infrastructure Manager, Kettle Produce, Ltd.

Kettle Produce started with the same telephony features employees are already used to, and is slowly introducing more features, such as conference calling, creating address books, and using the PC as a softphone. In addition, salespeople use the Unified Mobility feature to forward calls from their office number to their mobile phones, making it easier for customers and coworkers to reach them. "I no longer have to think about whether someone is in the office or on the road, because I can reach them wherever they are by dialing their office extension," Howard says.

For employees who divide their time between both sites, the company set up Cisco Business Edition 3000 to ring their phones in both locations, making it unnecessary for callers to try two extensions.

## Results

### More Efficient Internal Communications

Communication between sites has been simplified by the ability to use four-digit extension numbers. This capability makes it easier to communicate changes in customer orders on a timely basis, preventing a missed revenue opportunity from not producing the full order, or waste from packaging vegetables that the customer will not accept.

The company also likes being able to give all employees the same telephony features. "We used to have a class divide, because some employees had the most basic phones and others had more advanced capabilities like caller ID," says Berry. "With Business Edition 3000 and Cisco Unified IP phones, everyone has caller ID, the ability to put calls on hold, transfer calls, and more."

## PRODUCT LIST

### Unified Communications

- Cisco Business Edition 3000
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 6900 Series
- Cisco VG224 Analog Voice Gateway

## Simplified Management

IPcell quickly showed the IT team how to manage Cisco Business Edition 3000. “The management interface is very simple,” says Howard. “We just set up a new user, set up a new phone, and then connect the user to the phone. It’s self explanatory.”

Centrally managing voice in both locations saves valuable time for the small IT team. “If there’s a problem with the phones at the other site, we no longer have to drive over, put on protective clothing, and have a look,” says Berry. “We can control everything from a central administration portal.”

Telephone extension moves, additions, and changes are also simpler. Previously, the company had to pay US\$100 an hour for a technician to move phones if employees moved to a new office. This process involved checking which ports the phone connected to, and then swapping cables at the patch panel. “Before, when we were advised that a person or department was moving, we’d groan because that meant a day’s worth of cabling,” says Berry. “Now we just disconnect the phone from the old office and re-connect in the new location, and it works.” Not only is the company saving money, but employees can also start using their phones right away after the move instead of waiting until the service provider can visit.

## Improved Customer Experience

Supermarkets and retailers who want to place an order no longer have to try their sales representative’s office number and mobile number. Instead, a call to the office phone number also rings the mobile phone.

The company has set up the system so that if a call to the main desk is not answered within two rings, the call rings all other phones. This arrangement helps to make sure all customer calls are answered promptly.

## Next Steps

Kettle Produce looks forward to using more capabilities of Cisco Business Edition 3000, such as placing a video call as easily as placing a voice call. Video calling could replace certain in-person meetings, for example with a business partner in Spain that produces broccoli in the winter months, saving travel time and costs.

## For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Business Edition 3000, visit:

<http://www.cisco.com/en/US/products/ps11370/index.html>

To find out 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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