

## Law Firm Increases Efficiency and Client Service Levels

SmithAmundsen used Unified Communications to empower attorneys with advanced collaboration capabilities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<b>SMITHAMUNDSEN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal</li> <li>Chicago, Illinois</li> <li>130 Attorneys; 245 Total Employees</li> </ul>
<b>CHALLENGE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase attorney efficiency and effectiveness</li> <li>Reduce real estate costs</li> <li>Simplify IT management</li> </ul>
<b>SOLUTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cisco Unified Communications, including Cisco Unified Personal Communicator software for laptops</li> <li>Cisco WebEx for collaborating on cases, client presentations, and continuing legal education</li> <li>Cisco ASA Adaptive Security Appliance with Unified Communications phone proxy at headquarters, enabling attorneys to telework securely</li> </ul>
<b>RESULTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gained competitive advantage with advanced collaboration capabilities</li> <li>Accelerated integration of acquired firm into communications system from 60 to 2 days</li> <li>Consolidated branch offices by enabling attorneys to work virtually</li> </ul>

### Challenge

SmithAmundsen is a 130-lawyer firm headquartered in Chicago, with five branch offices in Illinois, Missouri, and Wisconsin. The firm's attorneys make it a point to understand their clients' industry and organization, with the goal of better verdicts and lower settlements.

When it came time to replace the aging private branch exchange (PBX) system, SmithAmundsen recognized an opportunity to gain a competitive advantage by implementing advanced collaboration tools. "We didn't want just another voice system," says Randall Kalik, the firm's chief information officer. "We wanted a collaboration platform that would help our attorneys work more effectively and efficiently."

The firm's leaders envisioned attorneys being able to reach out to colleagues in other states as easily as they could to people in the same office. Attorneys in suburban areas would be able to work from home while appearing to clients and colleagues as if they were in the office, saving office real estate costs. Mobile employees would be able to listen to office voicemail from their smartphones with the touch of an icon. And video-conferencing tools would enable clearer communications and avoid unproductive time spent traveling for internal meetings. Finally, SmithAmundsen wanted a platform that could adapt over time to provide more collaboration capabilities,

extending the life and value of the firm's investment.

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### Solution

After carefully evaluating two communications platforms, SmithAmundsen selected Cisco® Unified Communications. "Not only does Cisco provide a wide range of collaboration tools, it also integrates with tools we already use, such as

Microsoft Outlook,” says Kalik. “In addition, we already had a Cisco network, and using the same vendor for the network and unified communications simplifies management and support for our IT team.”

The firm engaged ITPointe, an ALTEK Company and Cisco partner, to plan and implement the Cisco Unified Communications solution. Servers in the headquarters location deliver unified communications services to the other offices over the WAN. These offices need only a Cisco ISR Integrated Services Router and Cisco Unified IP Phones. Attorneys who work from a home office need only a Cisco Unified IP Phone or Cisco Unified Personal Communicator software and a broadband connection. Voice traffic travels securely over the Internet, because it is encrypted by a Cisco ASA Adaptive Security Appliance 5510 at the headquarters, using the Unified Communications proxy feature.

Whether they work in a physical or virtual office, attorneys and staff use Cisco Unified Personal Communicator software on their laptops to access all of their collaboration tools. These tools include a softphone, Cisco WebEx™, desktop sharing, Cisco Unity® Connection voice messaging, presence, and instant messaging. Presence information shows whether colleagues are online, on the phone, or do not wish to be disturbed, helping employees reach the right person, the first time. “And compared to other desktop communications software, Cisco Unified Personal Communicator is easier to maintain,” Kalik says.

Employees increasingly incorporate video and web sharing into their interactions. Attorneys routinely join Cisco WebEx® meetings to collaborate on cases, make client presentations, and participate in continuing legal education courses. “Hundreds of clients joined a Cisco WebEx session to hear and see one of our attorneys give a presentation about the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act,” says Kalik. “The session strengthened our role as a trusted advisor, and clients appreciated being able to learn from us without the time and expense of travel.”

To prepare for the future, SmithAmundsen purchased Cisco Unified Workspace Licensing, which combines all client and server software, licensing, and service and support in a simple package. “Cisco Unified Workspace Licensing will enable us to easily add mobility and other capabilities in the future,” says Kalik. One plan is to use the Cisco Unified Mobility feature to transfer calls from a smartphone to the Cisco Unified IP Phone without interrupting the conversation. “Clients appreciate details like this, and they help to reinforce SmithAmundsen as a technology leader in the legal field,” Kalik says.

## Results

### Increased Efficiency and Effectiveness for Attorneys

Advanced collaboration tools help attorneys obtain information more quickly. For example, presence technology built into Cisco Unified Personal Communicator makes it easier to conduct cross-practice group discussions. A labor attorney who has questions about a regulation can view presence information to find an HR specialist who is currently online, and then just click to send an instant message. If necessary, the attorney can click again to escalate to a voice conversation, or to a Cisco WebEx session. Similarly, a proposals specialist can quickly reach out to an attorney in a particular practice area to ask a question. “Legal teams generally have strict deadlines, and Cisco collaboration tools help us work more efficiently, so we can get the best possible result for our clients,” Kalik says.

Video conferencing also increases efficiency. The firm’s partners use the Cisco Unified IP Phone 9971, which has a large, high-resolution color display. Each office also has at least one of the phones. Making a video call is exactly the same as making an ordinary phone call. “Video adds an interesting dynamic to communications, because you can see the other party’s expression to gauge their reaction,” Kalik says. The firm’s equity partners are especially pleased with the prospect of using video conferencing for winter meetings, freeing up hours of travel time to work on cases.

### Excellent Caller Experience

Previously, the firm’s receptionists had to rifle through a paper directory to find employee extensions while callers waited. Cisco Unified Communications Manager Enterprise Attendant Console creates a much better experience because receptionists can see employee extensions and presence information on screen. The receptionist can ask

whether the caller would prefer to speak with someone else before transferring a call to voicemail, and callers who do reach voicemail are given the option to return to the operator or be connected to the attorney's assistant.

ALTEK integrated the console with a touch screen monitor, so that receptionists can transfer calls with the touch of a finger. "When clients enter the lobby, their first impression is that SmithAmundsen is forward-thinking," Kalik says.

### Real Estate Savings

SmithAmundsen is growing by acquisition, and Cisco Unified Communications simplifies the process. Previously, integrating an acquired office into the firm's communications system might take 60 days, for system configuration and line provisioning. "With Cisco Unified Communications, lateral attorneys from acquired firms are integrated into our system in just two days," Kalik says. "All they need to work virtually is a Cisco Unified IP Phone or softphone and a broadband connection."

By giving attorneys the collaboration tools to work from home offices, SmithAmundsen also saves on real estate costs. Virtual attorneys have a phone number with the firm's area code and prefix, can place and transfer calls with four-digit dialing, join Cisco WebEx calls from Cisco Unified Personal Communicator, see coworkers' presence information, and send instant messages as if they worked in a physical office.

### Increased Efficiency for Mobile Attorneys

The new collaboration platform even helps the firm's attorneys be more responsive to clients when traveling. Integration of their BlackBerry smartphones with the office phone system is a favorite capability. With Cisco Unified Mobile Communicator, for example, employees receive notification of office voicemails on their BlackBerry phones and can just click to listen. "It's all integrated, so deleting a message on the smartphone also deletes it from the Cisco Unity Connection voicemail system," Kalik says.

### Recruitment and Retention Advantage

Attorneys want tools that help them work efficiently and effectively, so SmithAmundsen regards Cisco Unified Communications and Cisco WebEx as an advantage for recruiting and retaining top legal talent. "Our attorneys can spend more time doing legal work because they spend less time trying to reach each other and retrieving messages," Kalik says. Many also appreciate the option to work from home.

#### PRODUCT LIST

##### Collaboration, Voice, and Video

##### Voice and Unified Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 9971, 7945, 7965, and 7937
- Cisco Unity Connection Voice Messaging
- Cisco Unified Personal Communicator
- Cisco Unified Presence Server
- Cisco Unified Mobile Communicator
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager Enterprise Attendant Console

##### Conferencing

- Cisco WebEx

##### Networking Systems

- Cisco ASA Adaptive Security Appliance 5510 with Unified Communications proxy feature
- Cisco ISR Integrated Services Routers 2911, 2821, and 2811
- Cisco Catalyst® Switch 3750G and 2960, some with Power over Ethernet

##### Wireless

- Cisco Wireless LAN Controller 2106
- Cisco Aironet® Wireless Access Point 1142

### Next Steps

When the firm upgrades to Cisco Unity Connection 8, attorneys will take advantage of Cisco SpeechView, the voicemail-to-text conversion feature, in the courtroom. An attorney who receives a pertinent voicemail, such as information about a witness's location on a certain date, will be able to read it on the smartphone without being noticeable. "This will be a huge benefit to our clients," Kalik says. "And receiving the information in this format might change the way we proceed with questioning."

### Technical Implementation

ALTEK helped design the Cisco Unified Communications system for high availability. If the WAN link between branch offices and headquarters should become unavailable, the branch office router automatically begins routing calls over the public switched telephone network (PSTN), resuming the WAN connection when it is restored. Similarly, if the headquarters facility becomes unavailable because of a disaster or weather-related emergency, communications automatically

fail over to another set of Cisco Unified Communications servers in a collocation facility in another state.

### **For More Information**

To find out more about Cisco Unified Communications, visit: <http://www.cisco.com/go/unifiedcommunications>.

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



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