Enterprise Rapidly Integrates Acquired Company

Republic Services, Inc. used Unified Communications, TelePresence, and WebEx, and WebEx Connect for collaboration.

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<tr><td>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</td></tr>
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- Republic Services, Inc.
- Solid Waste Collection, Disposal and Recycling
- Phoenix, Arizona
- 31,000 Employees

CHALLENGE

- Efficiently integrate acquired companies
- Enable collaboration within virtual teams
- Create consistent customer service experience

SOLUTION

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager system with 6,000 Cisco Unified IP Phones
- Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise for 1.25 million customer calls monthly, with Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal for national account customer self-service
- Cisco WebEx and Cisco TelePresence for videoconferencing, and Cisco WebEx Connect for instant messaging

RESULTS

- Contributed to US$190 million in savings from synergies after the acquisition
- Avoided approximately $250,000 in travel costs during two-year company-integration process
- Improved customer interaction by saving an average of three minutes hold time per call

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Challenge

Republic Services, Inc. is a leading provider of solid waste collection, transfer, recycling, and disposal services. The company operates 348 collection companies in 40 states and Puerto Rico. Millions of residential customers receive waste collection services from Republic Services through its contracts with more than 2,800 municipalities.

The company has grown through mergers and acquisitions, and the purchase of Allied Waste in 2008 more than tripled annual revenues, from US$2.5 billion to $9 billion, while increasing the number of locations from 225 to 750. Integrating companies has been a historical challenge in the waste management industry, often taking many years and exceeding cost estimates. To accomplish the integration within two years, Republic Services realized it needed to shift from a decentralized to a centralized business model. "Meshing together the regional companies would require integrating operations and systems as fast as possible," says Doug Saunders, IT director for Republic Services.

Specifically, the company needed a way for virtual teams with members in different locations to collaborate anywhere, anytime, preferably without the high costs and productivity loss of travel. As part of the integration effort, Republic wanted to move all locations to the same voice system, saving capital costs as well as ongoing operational expense. The company also wanted to make sure that customers everywhere had the same excellent customer service experience. Republic Services' 700 contact center agents handle 1.25 million customer calls monthly.

> "When Republic Services acquired Allied Waste, Cisco collaboration tools were instrumental in helping to complete 36 IT integration projects on time and under budget, resulting in $190 million in savings through synergies."
> **— Doug Saunders, IT Director, Republic Services, Inc.**

Solution

Republic Services achieved its goals with help from Cisco Unified Communications and Cisco collaboration tools. Both Republic and Allied Waste already used Cisco Unified Communications in some locations. "We standardized on Cisco Unified Communications for cost control, and then increased return on investment by adding Cisco collaboration and business video tools," says Saunders.

Centralized Cisco Unified Communications Manager and Cisco Unity Connection servers deliver voice and unified messaging services over the network to different offices. So far, the company has approximately 6,000 Cisco Unified IP Phones. Employees can manage and playback voicemail messages from an IP phone, mobile phone, email client, or browser, whichever is most convenient.

Virtual teams at Republic use Cisco WebEx Meeting Center and Cisco TelePresence systems for voice and video collaboration, avoiding travel. While integrating the new company, the IT team and field personnel used Cisco WebEx to collaborate with third-party vendors and contractors on 36 system integration projects. "WebEx made our meetings more productive than they would have been with voice alone because we could share project documents in real-time," Saunders said. "Plus, we reduced travel time and costs by 25 percent compared to previous projects." Similarly, the training department used Cisco WebEx Training Center to deliver about 11,250 hours of employee training in 2009 alone, 15 percent of all training. The company estimates that Cisco WebEx helped avoid approximately $100,000 in trainers' travel costs associated with integrating the new company.

> "Since we started using Cisco WebEx Connect for instant messaging with virtual teams, my average daily emails have decreased 25 percent, from 400 to 300, increasing my productivity."
> — Doug Saunders, IT Director, Republic Services, Inc.

To get quick answers from coworkers, the 170-person IT team and about 160 sales and operations personnel use Cisco WebEx Connect to see whether coworkers are online and then send an instant message. "Since we started using Cisco WebEx Connect for instant messaging with virtual teams, my average daily emails have decreased 25 percent, from 400 to 300, increasing my productivity," says Saunders. Mobile employees can use WebEx Connect on their iPhones, BlackBerrys, and Android smartphones. Cisco WebEx Connect also streamlines processes such as month-end close by enabling budget analysts to get answers from coworkers faster than if they sent an email and waited for a response.

To create a consistently excellent customer service experience, Republic uses Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise for its national account contact center and about 75 customer service centers. The company centrally manages agent scripts developed for small, medium, and large regional operations.

> "Automated order entry with Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal saves approximately five minutes apiece for each of 100-200 daily service requests, the equivalent of one to two full-time employees."
> — Doug Saunders, IT Director, Republic Services, Inc.

For a major national account customer, Republic streamlined customer interactions by offering a self-service interactive voice response (IVR) application using Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal. The application prompts the customer to say the store number and a code representing the requested action, such as container pickup and return. Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal is integrated with the customer relationship management (CRM) system so that customer orders are entered without any agent involvement. "Automated order entry with Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal saves approximately five minutes apiece for each of 100-200 daily service requests, the equivalent of one to two full-time employees," Saunders says.

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PRODUCT LIST

Voice and Unified Communications
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 7900 Series
- Cisco Unity Connection

Customer Care
- Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise
- Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal

Conferencing
- Cisco WebEx Meeting Center

Messaging
- Cisco WebEx Connect

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Results

Rapid Company Integration

Cisco collaboration tools helped Republic Services achieve its goal to complete the integration in two years, much faster than typical in the industry. "After acquiring Allied Waste, Cisco collaboration tools were instrumental in helping us complete 36 IT integration projects on time and under budget to save $190 million through synergies," says Saunders. "We exceeded our savings goal by $40 million."

Cisco WebEx played an important behind-the-scenes role. For example, instead of repeatedly flying CRM experts from multiple locations to headquarters to plan the integration, the company used Cisco WebEx to accomplish the same results. "Had we traveled instead of using Cisco WebEx, we estimate we would have spent an additional $150,000," says Saunders.

Efficient Customer Interaction

National account customers appreciate the self-service IVR application based on Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal because it saves them from having to wait an average of three minutes while the agent retrieves the record and enters the service request. Currently, customers choose the self-service option for more than one-third of all service requests, and the proportion is increasing. Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal treats calls at the most efficient location, such as a local gateway, while still allowing the centralized control that keeps costs down. Republic plans to introduce a smartphone application so that warehouse personnel can conveniently request container pickup without having to walk to a landline phone.

The unified contact center platform also helps the company deliver a consistent user experience in all nationwide offices. Managers use Cisco Unified Intelligence Center as an information portal to view metrics from all of the regional contact centers, which helps to identify potential issues and training opportunities.

Effective Collaboration with a Distributed Workforce

Employees in different locations interact using Cisco TelePresence systems in conference rooms and Cisco WebEx High-Quality Video on their desktops. "High-definition video is like sitting across the table with the other person, making it feel like a face-to-face conversation," says Saunders. "You accomplish more in the same time when you can see people's reactions on their faces instead of trying to guess from their voices."

Business Continuance

Cisco Unified Communications even helps to ensure business continuity. When Hurricane Ike approached the Houston, Texas area in 2008, Republic Services sent its contact center agents home, and yet could continue answering calls by routing them to the Dallas contact center. "So long as a building has power and the telephone lines are operating, we can use Cisco Unified Communications Manager to route calls to any of our locations, providing the dependable service our customers count on," says Saunders.

Next Steps

Republic is investigating more ways to take advantage of Cisco Unified Communications to increase competitiveness:

- Offering the self-service Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal application to other large national account customers.
- Integrating customer email and web chat into the contact center, using Cisco Unified Email Integration Manager and Web Interaction Manager. "Social media interaction is increasingly becoming a requirement for municipal contracts," Saunders says. To monitor and proactively respond to customers voicing concerns or issues using social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and other public forums, Republic is considering using Cisco SocialMiner, a social media customer care solution. Cisco SocialMiner captures and organizes these public customer posts, and then routes them to agents who can respond on the same social network the customer used.
- Providing customer history to agents at the same time they receive the call. Republic will accomplish this by integrating Cisco Unified Contact Center with the company's CRM software.
- Lowering connection costs to the service provider by taking advantage of session-initiation protocol (SIP) support in Cisco Unified Communications Manager.
- Adding onboard mobility and video capabilities for drivers, enabling them to communicate with operations, customer service, and sales. "Being more responsive about last-minute orders, for example, is a competitive advantage when we bid for contracts," Saunders says. In addition, with IP-based video cameras in trucks, drivers will be able to document issues that require extra charges, such as overstuffed containers.
- Moving the contact center to the cloud, working with a provider who offers Cisco Unified Contact Center as a service.

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Collaboration, visit: http://www.cisco.com/go/collaboration.

To find out more about Cisco WebEx, visit: http://www.cisco.com/go/webex.

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

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