

Partner Empowers Global Teams with Online Communities

avodaq implemented Cisco Collaboration suite, including enterprise social software, IM and presence, telepresence, and web conferencing.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: avodaqAG
Industry: IT Services Provider
Location: Hamburg, Germany
Number of Employees: 90

CHALLENGES

- Optimize performance of distributed workforce
- Organize distributed documents and information
- Maximize mobile workforce efficiency and reduce travel expense

SOLUTION

- Created virtual communities where employees share and find updates, content, and knowledge, with Cisco WebEx Social
- Enabled real-time collaboration with customers and mobile and remote employees, with Cisco WebEx and Jabber
- Enabled in-person interactions with employees and customers in any office, with immersive Cisco TelePresence experience

RESULTS

- Improved responsiveness by giving distributed employees faster access to experts and information
- Empowered mobile workers
- Avoided 100 trips annually, saving an estimated US\$100,000 without sacrificing the in-person experience

Challenge

Founded in 1997, avodaqAG is a Cisco Gold Certified Partner and Master Partner in Unified Communications, delivering planning, design, implementation, operational, optimization, and learning services. avodaq distinguishes itself with technical depth, including 13 CCIE® engineers, as well as a strong commitment to customer satisfaction. The company earned the Cisco “best-in-class” designation for Cisco® Unified Communications Manager Versions 6, 7, and 8.

Like many of its customers, avodaq strives to optimize the performance of project teams distributed across multiple locations. Of the company’s 90 employees, only about half work at company headquarters in Hamburg, Germany, while the others are based in three other offices in Germany and one in Singapore. Many employees work some or all of the time from home offices.

avodaq’s workspace has evolved over the years to support globally distributed teams and a more mobile workforce. For example, employees and customers in different locations can interact with an in-person experience using immersive Cisco TelePresence® Systems TX1300 in each office, as well as desktop Cisco TelePresence Systems. Employees and customers join Cisco WebEx® Meeting Center for web collaboration, and employees use Cisco Jabber™ for presence and instant messaging.

But something was missing. “We didn’t have a good way to make sure everyone on a virtual team had access to all of the relevant files and information pertaining to a project,” says Andreas Kusch, chief executive officer for avodaq. Instead, documents and information tended to be scattered across multiple offices and team members’ hard drives, making it difficult to find all information pertinent to a particular project. “We realized that an enterprise collaboration platform with social networking features would help employees find information and expertise more quickly, maximizing team performance while further increasing customer satisfaction,” Kusch says.

Solution

avodaq has optimized team performance by enabling employees to easily create communities populated with relevant document, information, and expertise, using Cisco WebEx Social™. Employees in all five offices use the Cisco WebEx Social enterprise collaboration platform for project management, customer support, and knowledge sharing:

- **Project Management:** “Project team members in any location join a Cisco WebEx Social community to share documents, updates, blogs, and wikis,” says Manuel Michel, solution architect for avodaq. “Consolidating all information in a community makes it searchable.” Team members can also check each other’s presence and click to initiate a Jabber instant messaging session or WebEx conference from within WebEx Social. Threaded discussions are easier to follow than group email communications. And employees can create watch lists to receive alerts about project news.
- **Customer Support:** Engineers in avodaq’s Service Center created a Cisco WebEx Social community for virtual team communications, discussion forums, and wikis, allowing them to improve customer satisfaction by sharing information and documents about customer engagements.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** The avodaq IT team has its own WebEx Social community for sharing know-how, documentation, and procedures. The team also integrated its community with the internal IT ticket system, which spares engineers from having to go back and forth between two interfaces throughout the workday.



“Flexible search options in Cisco WebEx Social enable sales and service center employees to very quickly find all information about a particular aspect of a project. Making it faster to find a document or answer increases productivity, efficiency, and response times.”

— Manuel Michel, Enterprise Social Software Solution Architect, avodaqAG

Cisco WebEx Social is the latest addition to avodaq’s collection of Cisco Collaboration applications. Already a Cisco TelePresence user, each avodaq office has at least one Cisco TelePresence TX1300 System to enable employees and customers to interact with an in-person experience. During customer engagements, avodaq CCIEs can conduct in-person discussions with customers in any other location, avoiding the need to assign a CCIE to each customer site and optimizing these engineers’ valuable time. As CEO, Kusch estimates he spends about half of each day using a desktop Cisco TelePresence EX-90 System in his office to interview job candidates, provide employee performance reviews, and meet with customers. “In the past, I had to travel for all of these interactions or, in the case of job interviews, bring the applicant to Hamburg,” he says. “With Cisco TelePresence, I avoided 15 trips annually just for job interviews, and have hired more than five persons without any travel expenses at all.”

avodaq also conducts shareholder meetings using Cisco TelePresence, using one display for video and another for presentations. Board members and partners need only travel as far as the nearest avodaq office to join a session.

Web conferencing is another integral part of avodaq's daily operations. The company's sales force and Service Center engineers meet with customers and share desktops using Cisco WebEx Meeting Center. "After a WebEx session with a customer, our service center engineers post updates to the Cisco WebEx Social community so that everyone on the team has the latest information," says Michel. avodaq manages the audio portion of Cisco WebEx sessions on Cisco Unified MeetingPlace®, which is fully integrated with WebEx, to lower costs.



Another way avodaq maximizes the efficiency of its virtual teams is by using Cisco Jabber for Windows, Mac, and iPhone for presence and instant messaging. "I have chatted with an employee on assignment in Hong Kong, and then just clicked to escalate to a WebEx session with high-quality video and web sharing," says Kusch. Thanks to federated intradomain presence, employees can also see presence information for their Cisco contacts. And Cisco Intercompany Media Engine enables avodaq employees to use Cisco Unified Communications Manager features such as call back and instant video when communicating with Cisco and other partners.

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Finally, avodaq conserves data center space, power, and cooling by hosting its Cisco Unified Communications and collaboration applications on a Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS™) B200 M2 Blade Servers. Receptionists in all offices work on virtual desktops hosted on the system, eliminating the overhead of keeping individual desktops patched and up-to-date.

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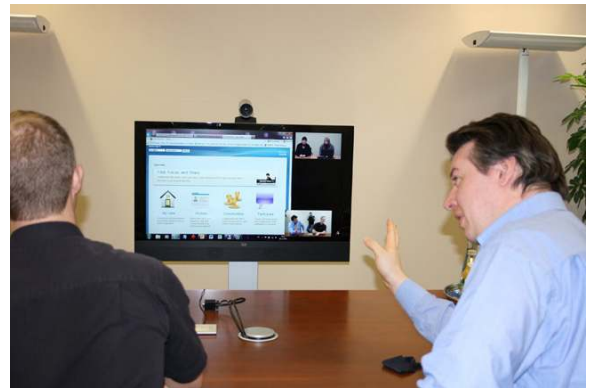
Results

Increased Organizational Efficiency among Distributed Workforce

Cisco WebEx Social helps avodaq's project team members collaborate efficiently from any office. "Flexible search options in WebEx Social enable sales and service center employees to very quickly find all information about a particular aspect of a project," says Michel. "Making it faster to find a document or answer increases productivity, efficiency, and response times. In addition, many employees work from home offices, and WebEx Social enables them to participate fully and feel connected to the company."

Empowered Mobile Employees

avodaq employees all have iPhones, and many also use iPads or Cisco Cius™ mobile collaboration devices. Cisco Jabber allows employees to use their mobile devices as if they were Cisco Unified IP Phones, making and receiving calls from their office phone number, IMing with anyone on their corporate contact list, and enjoying the convenience of Visual Voicemail. The Cisco WebEx app lets them join meetings with the tap of a finger, from anywhere, on any device.



Return on Investment

Cisco Unified Communications and collaboration applications have paid for themselves:

- **Travel Reduction:** "The in-person experience of Cisco TelePresence means we don't have to travel so often," Kusch says. "I estimate we've eliminated 100 trips annually, saving approximately US\$100,000."
- **Audio Conferencing Savings:** avodaq takes advantage of Cisco Unified Communications to lower audio conferencing costs by connecting it to Cisco Unified MeetingPlace. Already fully integrated with Cisco WebEx, Cisco Unified MeetingPlace significantly lowers the costs of the audio portion of Cisco WebEx sessions.
- **Optimized Team Performance:** Cisco WebEx Social and Jabber help salespeople and engineers more quickly access information and expertise, helping them provide the industry-leading customer satisfaction that has propelled avodaq to the top of its field.
- **Lower Support Costs:** Consolidating multiple collaboration tools into WebEx Social reduced application, support, and server costs. Likewise, consolidating all collaboration servers onto the Cisco Unified Computing System reduced data center space, power, and cooling requirements.

First-Hand Experience Strengthens Sales

Using Cisco Collaboration tools internally allows avodaq salespeople to speak credibly about how the tools increase their own productivity, which helps in sales engagements. "Our customers get excited when they see me using Jabber," Kusch says. "I point out that having a full suite of communications tools (presence, chat federation, and integrated video) in one interface is very useful. I call it my comfort workspace."

PRODUCT LIST

Unified Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager 8.6
- Cisco Prime Unified Operations Manager
- Cisco Prime Unified Service Monitor
- Cisco Intercompany Media Engine
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 6900, 7900, 8900, 9900 Series
- Cisco Unified Wireless IP Phones 7921G, 7925G
- Cisco Cius Mobile Collaboration Endpoint

Customer Care

- Cisco Unified Contact Center Express

Collaboration Applications

- Cisco WebEx Social 2.5.2
- Cisco Jabber for iPhone
- Cisco Jabber IM for iPhone
- Cisco Jabber for Windows
- Cisco Jabber for MAC
- Cisco Unity® Connection
- Cisco Unified MeetingPlace
- Cisco Unified Video conferencing
- Cisco WebEx Meeting Center
- Cisco WebEx Training Center
- Cisco WebEx Support Center

TelePresence

- Cisco TelePresence System 1300, MX200, EX90, 1090
- Cisco TelePresence Video Communication Server

Data Center

- Cisco UCS B200 M2 Blade Servers

avodaq recently closed a deal with Bank am Bellevue of Zurich, Switzerland. The bank has about the same number of employees as avodaq as well as a similar business goal: to bring employee teams together across several divisions. "One of the bank's business challenges was efficiently sharing 1000 new files monthly, created by the bank's Asset Management division," says Michel. "It's annoying to use email as a collaboration tool. We described our own experience with Cisco WebEx Social to illustrate the benefits for file sharing." avodaq also provided Bank am Bellevue with planning, implementation, and training services, and first-level support, and customized WebEx Social's web front-end to provide the same design user interface as the bank's homepage.

Next Steps

avodaq continues to add new Cisco collaboration applications as it discovers and develops new use cases for Cisco WebEx Social and Cisco video solutions. One plan is to begin using Cisco Unified Contact Center Express, currently used for developing customer scripts, to improve the customer experience in the service center.

For More Information

Learn more about Cisco Collaboration at <http://www.cisco.com/go/collaboration>.

Join discussions and share best practices at <http://www.cisco.com/go/joinconversation>.



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