

Software Developer Connects Global Workforce with Social Networking

Persistent Systems implemented Quad to consolidate multiple social networking tools, Show and Share, and WebEx on one platform.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Persistent Systems Ltd.

Industry: Outsourced Software Product Development

Headquarters: Pune, India

Number of Employees: 6700 Employees

Website: <http://www.persistentssys.com/>

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Quickly identify and assemble virtual teams of experts for client projects
- Help enable collaboration by globally dispersed workforce
- Minimize IT workload associated with collaboration applications

NETWORK SOLUTION

- Consolidated multiple collaboration capabilities in one interface, Cisco Quad
- Integrated Cisco Quad with Microsoft SharePoint
- Minimized costs by implementing Cisco Quad on Cisco Unified Computing System

BUSINESS RESULTS

- Accelerated project-team formation from five to two days
- Freed up 30 hours a week for sales by increasing meeting efficiency
- Reduced time needed for planning activities by 30 percent, gaining time for higher-value activities

Challenge

An award-winning global software-development firm headquartered in Pune, India, Persistent Systems has delivered more than 3000 software product releases since 2007, for customers in the technology, telecommunication, life science, healthcare, banking, and consumer products industries. Persistent differentiates itself by applying industry-leading product engineering processes.

The company's 6700 employees work in nine development centers on three continents. "Based on the project requirements, we assemble a team of experts who might be in any of our global offices," says Ajay Deshpande, chief architect for Persistent. "Effective collaboration is mandatory for success."

Persistent was founded in 1990, and in its early days, employees relied on email for collaboration. More recently, teams have begun sharing documents on a SharePoint portal; participating in Cisco WebEx® web conferences; and using social networking tools such as wikis, blogs, and discussion forums. "Each tool was effective, but having to work with multiple applications taxed our IT team as well as our employees," says Deshpande. "As we added more employees in more time zones, our need for a unified enterprise collaboration platform became more imperative."

Solution

Now Persistent employees can use one application, Cisco Quad™, for a wide range of social networking capabilities, including posts, blogs, communities, and search. The same interface lets them schedule and join Cisco® WebEx web conferences. Persistent also used the open APIs in Cisco Quad to integrate it with SharePoint. "Enabling employees to access documents in SharePoint in the context of a project or workflow makes the documents more valuable," says Deshpande.

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Popular use cases for Cisco Quad include team communications, identifying personnel with particular skills, and corporate events planning. “We are slowly moving away from a document-centric way of collaborating by replacing certain spreadsheets with Cisco Quad tables,” says Deshpande. “Information becomes more valuable when we share it in Quad because we can also capture team members’ comments.”

Persistent initially deployed Cisco Quad to the 200 employees who develop collaboration software. Since then, the user population has grown to 4000 employees using PCs, mobile devices, and Macs.

“Some people adopted Quad immediately, but many others needed to be enticed to try it once before they recognized how it would help them work,” Deshpande says. The company encouraged adoption in the following ways:

- Adding entertainment content: The IT team created a community called Clicks, where employees can share and comment on photos. “Fun content attracts people to Quad, and once they log on, they see the value of Quad for everyday work,” says Deshpande. After visiting Clicks, a long-time employee volunteered to provide photographs and articles from 20 years of annual company get-togethers, excited by the opportunity to preserve the company history.
- Making Cisco Quad the sole source for certain content: Instead of distributing important corporate communications about new executives and awards through email, the company now posts the content in a Quad community called Persistent Buzz. Employees receive a short, catchy email stating that the content is available, with a link to the post. When the CEO launched a campaign to name buildings on a new campus, the post received 173 entries, one of which was selected as the winner.
- Sharing live video of important announcements from senior managers: From within Cisco Quad, employees can view live video and video on demand using Cisco Show and Share™, a webcasting and video-sharing application. The company streamed its 22nd anniversary celebration to employees who could not attend in person. “More than 750 people watched part of the live stream, including 75 from the United States, and the video is now available on demand,” says Deshpande.

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— Ajay Deshpande, Chief Architect, Persistent Systems Ltd.

Cisco Quad and Cisco Unified Communications Manager are hosted on the energy-efficient Cisco Unified Computing System™ C200 M2 High-Density Rack-Mount Server, which minimizes data center space, power, and cooling requirements.

Results

By reducing reliance on email for organizational communications, Cisco Quad is helping people work more efficiently and fostering a culture of collaboration.

Freed Up 30 Hours Weekly for Customer Interaction

The global sales team conducts a weekly Cisco WebEx Meeting Center session with approximately 25 participants. In the past, salespeople spent the first 60-90 minutes reporting on the week's activities. Now salespeople post microblogs, enabling managers to limit the discussion to a few topics. "Asking salespeople to microblog about the week's activities in advance of weekly sales meetings reduced meeting time from 90 minutes to 15-20 minutes, an 80 percent savings," says Deshpande. "Collectively, the 25 people on the call have freed up approximately 30 hours weekly for more customer interaction."

Accelerated Formation of Project Teams

When a customer engages Persistent for software development, the project cannot begin until the manager has identified team members with the required expertise, such as programming languages or industry experience. Previously, developers did not always update the skills database on a timely basis, making it difficult to quickly locate expertise in a workforce of thousands.

Now the company encourages developers to update their profiles in Cisco Quad. "People are more likely to keep their profile up-to-date in Quad, because they already have the application open for collaboration, and they appreciate the opportunity to showcase their expertise to the wider community," Deshpande says. Another way employees can share their expertise is by tagging keywords in their posts and articles. "Identifying experts to staff new project teams now takes an average of two days, compared to five days with our old process," says Deshpande.

"Cisco Quad aligns very well with Persistent's corporate culture. It provides a platform for people to express themselves and strengthen their sense of connection to the company. At the same time, it helps management seek out the wisdom of the crowds."

— Ajay Deshpande, Chief Architect, Persistent Systems Ltd.

To make it even easier to identify employees with particular skills, Persistent used the open APIs in Cisco Quad to integrate with a third-party enterprise search tool that scans for keywords. The integration creates a "mash-up" of employee profiles and keywords in their documents, providing a more complete picture of skills. Later, Persistent plans to also integrate Cisco Quad with a database that indicates whether employees are available to begin a new project.

Increased Planning Efficiency

Cisco Quad also makes planning exercises more efficient, freeing more time for execution. For example, senior managers created a private community for annual fiscal-year planning, commenting on each other's posts and microblogs and joining Cisco WebEx sessions for real-time collaboration. "Fiscal-year planning takes 30 percent less of our senior managers' time now that we use Cisco Quad instead of SharePoint and email," Deshpande says. "They can reclaim that time to invest in customer relationships."

Staff members who organize the company's annual social gathering experience similar time savings by posting and commenting on plans for games, activities, food, and so on.

Deshpande concludes, "Cisco Quad aligns very well with Persistent's corporate culture. It provides a platform for people to express themselves and strengthen their sense of connection to the company. At the same time, it helps management seek out the wisdom of the crowds."

PRODUCT LIST

Unified Communications

- [Cisco Unified Communications Manager](#)
- [Cisco Unified IP Phones 7945](#)

Collaboration Applications

- [Cisco Quad](#)
- [Cisco Show and Share](#)
- [Cisco WebEx Meeting Center](#)

Data Center

- [Cisco Unified Computing System C200 M2](#)
- [Cisco Nexus 7000 and 5000 Switches](#)
- [Cisco ASA 5500 Series Adaptive Security Appliance](#)

Next Steps

Persistent plans to continually add new use cases for Cisco Quad, and to increase its value by using the open APIs to integrate with other tools and databases. "We have embarked on the social journey with Quad, and are excited about its potential to increase teamwork and efficiency throughout the organization," Deshande says.

The company is also adding other Cisco collaboration applications. For example, after upgrading from Microsoft Office Communicator to Microsoft Lync, Persistent will use Cisco UC Integration for Lync to provide a single interface for presence, instant messaging (IM), click to dial, and conferencing. Cisco UC Integration for Lync will

eliminate the expense of a separate call control system for IM. Instead, Cisco Unified Communications Manager will provide call control for IM as well as voice.

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>.



Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
San Jose, CA

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