

CISCO UNIFIED COMMUNICATION SYSTEM AIDS BUSINESS GROWTH FOR YORKSHIRE-BASED SMALL BUSINESS

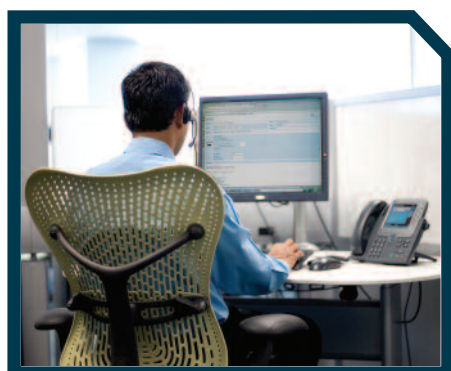
Direct Visual has implemented a Cisco Unified Communication system integrated with Microsoft CRM to improve communication with customers, increase levels of customer service and make its own staff more productive and effective.

Communicating to new markets and new audiences

Direct Visual is a 50-strong UK business and one of the leading providers of video conferencing services with around nine percent of the UK market. Traditionally, the company has provided video conferencing solutions to commercial and public organisations. However, with convergence in communication systems, video conferencing is increasingly regarded as part of a complete communications solution. For Direct Visual this means evolving its business to become a unified communications solution provider and expanding its traditional market audience to include medium sized organisations, particularly as technology makes video conferencing and unified communications easier and more cost effective for smaller organisations to use.

This change led Direct Visual to re-think its own internal and external communications strategy; part of which would require new relationship management processes. The company was starting to increase marketing campaigns, targeting different audiences and needed to track customer contact more effectively. The company had disconnected information about customers, customer records were held in different business systems such as financial, customer relationship management applications and a bespoke database application for customer support and there was limited integration between the business systems. Also, information on telephone activity was difficult to obtain. For example, gaining visibility of a marketing campaign's success was limited because it was difficult to determine type and level of outbound calls.

Glen Sykes, technical services manager for Direct Visual, says, "We needed a more efficient communications system to manage new and increasing business activity. Cisco provided us with a shining example of the best unified communications system, but it also gave us the ability to develop a complete and integrated communications solution because of the simple and effective integration between Cisco and our customer relationship management system."



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CUSTOMER NAME

- Direct Visual

INDUSTRY

- Business Services

BUSINESS SIZE

- Small Business

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Greater demand from customers for converged communications solutions
- Need to enter new markets and open up new audiences
- Deliver more effective and joined-up customer communication

NETWORK SOLUTION

- Cisco network foundation technologies
- Cisco Unified Communication, with Cisco Unified CRM Connector 3.0 and Microsoft Dynamics CRM 3.0

BUSINESS VALUE

- Improves and increases customer communication and customer service
- Increases staff productivity and efficiency
- Improves marketing campaign effectiveness
- Enables better human resource management

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Cisco makes business application integration easy

Direct Visual has implemented a new Cisco network platform comprising Local Area Networks (LANs) at its offices in Elland and Huddersfield, in Yorkshire, connected via a Wide Area Network (WAN). This platform enables improved and more effective ways of working such as home working and better information sharing around the business. Over this network, Direct Visual has deployed a Cisco Unified Communications system. This comprises software to manage telephone traffic and 54 Cisco Unified phones. It also integrates with a Cisco-based video conferencing system enabling staff to conduct desk-to-desk video conferencing.

The Cisco Unified Communications system has been integrated with Microsoft CRM – Direct Visual's new customer relationship (CRM) application. For example, from displays on the Cisco Unified phone handsets it is possible to access customer information held in the CRM application. In addition, staff are able to launch a telephone call via the Cisco Unified Communications system from a screen within the CRM application. Another example of integration is the fact that the Cisco Unified Communication system uses screen pop-ups so that whatever type of call is made – sales, marketing, after sales support – the call is recorded against that activity as well as against the relevant customer so that there is a context to the call, not just another call to that customer. The Cisco Unified Communications system includes several Cisco soft phones which enable staff to use make calls via their laptops as if they were sat at their desk and thus operate from any location with a network as if they were sitting in the office.

Direct Visual, which is also a Cisco SMB Select and Registered Partner, implemented its own Cisco solution.

Cisco delivers tangible business benefits

Direct Visual's CRM application, integrated with the Cisco Unified Communications system is starting to have a significant impact on a number of areas of the company's business from marketing to financial control.

James Keen, head of marketing at Direct Visual, says, "One of the problems was tracking marketing campaign effectiveness. We only had manual records to show whether calls were made or not. However, by integrating Cisco with our CRM application, I can see at a glance exactly which agents are making calls, how often and the duration of the calls. I can ensure that our campaigns are being conducted properly and redirect resources to ensure that a campaign is completed on time. I can measure success through the tracking tools in CRM and see which agents have been the most effective at generating new business. All this aids me greatly in reviewing the overall performance of my team and its contribution to the growth of the business."

Andrew Cowley, financial controller and administration manager, says, "The Cisco Unified Communications system has had an immediate and positive effect on my team's effectiveness. A great example of this is our telephony team, who prior to Cisco had no way of knowing with any certainty where someone was or whether they were on the phone. With the Cisco solution, it doesn't matter where they are, they're always on the same extension number, saving a lot of time and frustration. CRM has provided us with some great benefits, significantly streamlining our customer order purchasing process and allowing us with the same number of staff to significantly grow our business without straining the admin team."

Adele Shaw, an account manager at Direct Visual, says, "My role involves a lot of phone calls on a day to day basis. Knowing what past conversations have taken place with my clients is extremely important to me and being prepared for each and every phone call is key. The integration of the phone system with CRM has been brilliant in helping me to improve client communication. Before, customer service calls and sales calls were recorded in different places. But having visibility of all calls from around the business, in one central point helps me with my preparation for my next call. This visibility has also helped me to further justify to my clients the value of our service and on going support provided."

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As well as these benefits, Sykes adds that the Cisco solution has been an excellent showcase for Direct Visual to demonstrate the efficacy of integrating its video conference systems into converged communication systems. The company held an open day for customers and prospects to see its Cisco Unified Communications system. Sykes says, "Feedback has been very positive and we're expecting to generate new business off the back of the open day."

In addition to a direct impact on business, the Cisco solution delivers other advantages. Sykes says, "Being able to configure your own applications with the Cisco Unified Communications system is also proving a real benefit. We were having a problem tracking stock, especially demo stock. The challenge was not knowing, at any given time, where the demo stock was; whether it had been returned or was still with the customer. Because there are no computers in the warehouse, we've developed a system for the Cisco Unified handsets to be used to check kit in and out. This information is then recorded back into the CRM system."

The attendant console feature of the Cisco Unified phones enables someone answering a call to see who is on the phone. Sykes says, "The office receptionist absolutely loves this. She used to have a bit a paper and write down where every one was located, now she just needs to look at her hand set."

Desk availability had been a real problem and staff would be constantly changing desks and therefore extension numbers, so having extension mobility with the Cisco Unified Communications makes it quick and easy for staff to move around the new office, use hot desks or work at home.

Direct Visual is planning to extend the use of the Cisco Unified Communication system with mobile telephony. The company is currently evaluating 3G mobile handsets which would enable sales and field engineers to access the CRM system. They will be able to send and receive information to the CRM system and even hold video conference between remote and desktop users.



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Corporate Headquarters

Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-4000
800 553-NETS (6387)
Fax: 408 526-4100

European Headquarters

Cisco Systems International BV
Haarlerbergpark
Haarlerbergweg 13-19
1101 CH Amsterdam
The Netherlands
www-europe.cisco.com
Tel: 31 0 20 357 1000
Fax: 31 0 20 357 1100

Americas Headquarters

Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-7660
Fax: 408 527-0883

Asia Pacific Headquarters

Cisco Systems, Inc.
Capital Tower
168 Robinson Road
#22-01 to #29-01
Singapore 068912
www.cisco.com
Tel: +65 6317 7777
Fax: +65 6317 7799

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