

# World-Class Optician Offers Great Customer Service



Specsavers transforms contact centre operations, growing customer loyalty and achieving 20 percent increase in capacity.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Customer Name:** Specsavers

**Industry:** Retail

**Location:** Global company operating in more than 12 countries

**Number of Employees:** 26,000

### Challenge

- Reinforce Specsavers' market leadership, brand values, and competitive differentiation
- Increase customer loyalty and retention through improved customer service
- Sustain growth plans and strengthen company's business model

### Solution

- End-to-end architectural approach using Cisco Borderless Network to support Collaboration Applications, including Cisco Unified Contact Center Express

### Results

- Increased call centre capacity by 20 percent with no increase in staff
- Raised customer service levels through intelligent call handling and more integrated customer information
- Improved service to franchised retailers, and raised margins on those activities

## Challenge

Specsavers is a Guernsey-based corporation with a turnover of more than UK£1 billion and a network of 1700 optician stores globally, of which 700 are in the United Kingdom. The company's advertising campaigns have earned it a place in British popular culture, while more than one in three UK residents wear Specsavers spectacles, giving the company a 40 percent market share. It is also the leading UK supplier of hearing aid services, with its Hear Care business at more than 400 locations.

The Specsavers business model is franchise-based with nearly 2000 business partners. The customer service contact centre employs 120 customer service specialists, offering support across four main business streams:

- **Store Support:** assisting the stores managed by business partners
- **Lens Mail:** managing the postal lens service to customers
- **Hear Care:** assisting the largest hearing aid business in the United Kingdom
- **eCommerce:** answering queries on customers' web-based transactions

However, as its store numbers grew, Specsavers faced a number of challenges. Customers had lost patience with long call-answering times. They expected to be able to engage with Specsavers at their own convenience, often outside normal store opening hours, and through the channel of their choice. Furthermore, although customers felt an affinity with the Specsavers brand, their loyalty centred on individual branches, which meant that they did not always return after their first purchase.

Specsavers set itself the task of offering customers improved levels of service, seven days a week from 08.00 to 20.00, while reducing call abandonment rates. The company also sought a more personal and efficient call centre service, with shorter average call length.



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Jonathan George  
Head of Contact Centre Services  
Specsavers

“We could see that utilising technology to best effect would deliver a consistent and resilient service to business partners and consumers alike,” says Jonathan George, head of Contact Centre Services for Specsavers. “Above all, we wanted a solution that would support continued expansion of the store network with more robust business processes.”

Achieving those aims and growing customer loyalty would also need improvement in the quality of customer profile data and record keeping. The company realised, too, that significant business advantages could be gained through reduced in-store administration, while offering a more consistent customer experience across the store network.

### Solution

As part of a previous network technology refresh, Specsavers had upgraded its core (routing, switching, and security) infrastructure in line with the design principles of a Cisco® Borderless Network. The company chose to build on this infrastructure and invest in Cisco Unified Contact Centre Express, a key building block within the Cisco Collaboration Architecture.

“We assessed a variety of platforms,” says Jonathan George. “Without doubt, the Cisco Collaboration Architecture offered us the most robust and flexible solution. It was also modular and easy to implement over our existing network with minimal business disruption.”

Cisco Unified Contact Center Express introduces the features and functionality needed by organisations looking to make the best possible use of contact centre resources and deliver compelling experiences to customers. For Specsavers, these goals are achieved through five inter-related elements, working together to help ensure interoperability with existing assets. These key components include:

- **Call Control:** Cisco Unified Communications Manager streamlines call handling and forms the IP integration platform.
- **Call Routing:** Interactive Voice Response allows callers to self-select options for faster routing to the right agents.
- **Automatic Call Distribution:** enables intelligent or skills-based distribution of calls to customer service specialists using originating telephone number data.
- **Computer Telephony Integration:** interconnects with customer relationship management (CRM) applications to enable customer information to be screen-popped to agents’ desktops.
- **Workforce Management and Reporting:** enables real-time and historical reporting on call centre and agent performance.

This open integrated foundation works with existing Specsavers technologies to help realise transformed business processes, greater organisational efficiency, and accelerated time-to-market. In so doing, it breaks down barriers to collaboration. As a result, this foundation provides the organisational agility required to quickly respond to the changing needs of the Specsavers business.

“Cisco’s collaboration architecture enabled us to deliver on the Specsavers vision and reinforce our leadership position by using the network as the delivery platform,” says Jonathan George.

**“Cutting-edge technology, combined with a deep understanding of what we need to achieve for both our business and our customers, makes Cisco the ideal business partner.”**

Jonathan George  
Head of Contact Centre Services  
Specsavers

## Results

The investment in the Cisco Collaborative Architecture has supported the continued growth and expansion of the Specsavers network and provided an improved understanding of both customer and partner needs and behaviors.

“Following the implementation, there was a fundamental shift in the perception of our team internally,” says Jonathan George. “We are no longer seen as an overhead or cost centre. We demonstrated that we can deliver tangible value to the company; that we are a real business enabler and even a profit centre.”

The contact centre now operates seven days a week, 12 hours a day. Incoming customer callers are presented with fewer options and can be connected directly to the right specialist. If no specialist is available, the caller’s expectations are managed. Their position in the queue is announced. If they don’t want to wait, a Queue Buster facility enables them to request a call-back. This service is free of charge and has helped retain more customers, with 38 percent choosing this option rather than waiting on hold.

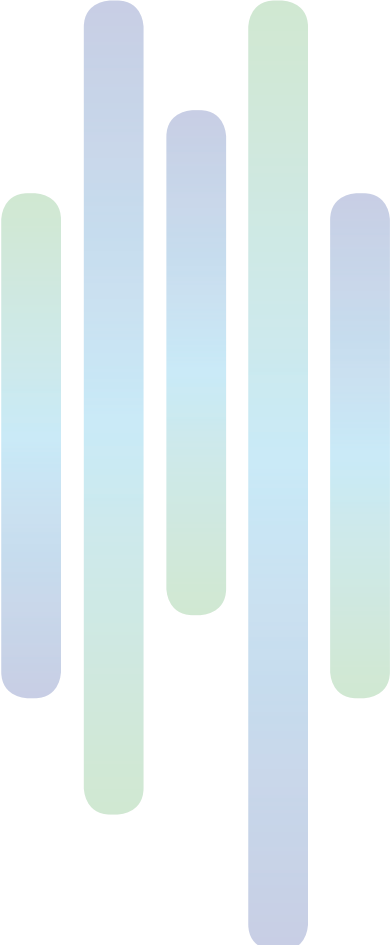
Cisco Unified Contact Center Express has enabled the existing team to scale to meet increased business needs and drive more varied types of customer and partner engagement without any increase in headcount. In fact, a 20 percent increase in call centre capacity has been achieved with no extra staff.

Improved and simplified business processes, enabled by the solution, have led to the introduction of better capacity and workflow planning. The contact centres now support all markets and stores in the Specsavers opticians and hearing centre network. The 120 customer service specialists handle up to 2500 calls a day. Service is managed by the Service Delivery team which consists of only four people, who help ensure the higher call volumes are handled by organising shifts and capacity planning.

The Specsavers customer experience is now consistent, regardless of which partner customers engage with or how they are engaged. Specialists have immediate access to customer records through screen pops, even before the call is answered, with the ability to amend this information in real time. So customer records are always fully up-to-date. Improved quality of customer profile data and management means that the customer knowledge available to Specsavers specialists is continuously improved.

The contact centre manages inbound and outbound customer call campaigns in support of prescription renewal reminders, appointment setting and reminders, and outstanding payments. The centre also handles email and web-driven customer enquiries and even Short Message Service (SMS) transactions. As a result, much of the administrative burden has been removed from the in-store teams. This shift enables Specsavers partners to focus on frontline customer engagement and provision of optical and hearing care, while more control of the customer experience has been passed back to Specsavers.

Service to partners is provided by Specsavers at a cost. Call recognition means incoming calls from partners are routed directly to dedicated specialist teams to help ensure better service. This capability not only improves communication and collaboration between Specsavers and its 2000 business partners, but also offers lower cost. It has actually helped create another profit centre within the business, from what was previously marginal activity.



“Cutting-edge technology, combined with a deep understanding of what we need to achieve for both our business and our customers, makes Cisco the ideal business partner,” says Jonathan George.

### Next Steps

Specsavers plans to integrate the Cisco Collaboration Architecture solution more fully with its CRM applications, data storage, and management systems to make further time and cost savings, as well as continue the focus on driving improved customer experience. Jonathan George concludes: “Specsavers has always and will always focus on delivering first-class customer service. We’re passionate about this. Further enhancements to our network are the next step in our goal to utilise technology for maximum business and customer benefit.”

### For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Collaboration Architecture, please go to: [www.cisco.com/go/collaboration](http://www.cisco.com/go/collaboration)

To find out more about Cisco voice and Unified Communications solutions, please go to: [www.cisco.com/en/US/products/sw/voicesw/index.html](http://www.cisco.com/en/US/products/sw/voicesw/index.html)

### Product List

#### Voice and Unified Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unified Contact Center Express
- Cisco Unified Workforce Optimization



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