Developing and Growing Workforce of the Future

Portuguese training academy transforms connectivity between six sites with Cisco Unified Communications and Collaboration tools

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: ATEC

Industry: Education and Consultancy

Location: Portugal

Number of Employees: 50

Challenge

- Improve communication across six ATEC sites
- Reduce cost and increase staff productivity
- Optimize internal processes and improve communication with external partners

Solution

- Cisco Business Edition 6000, supporting Cisco Jabber, TelePresence, Unified Contact Center Express, and IP Video Telephony
- Acquired technologies using Cisco Capital financing

Results

- Less travel and lower cost of meetings
- Improved collaboration between widely-distributed locations and external partners
- Better service for students and increased staff productivity, leading to greater operational efficiency

Challenge

Based in Portugal, ATEC is a non-profit training academy created by Volkswagen, Siemens, Bosch and AHK (German-Portuguese Chamber for Industry and Commerce). It aims to improve technical training and qualification levels, to increase students' employability, and provide a skilled future workforce. Situated in Palmela, near Lisbon, ATEC has five other centers across Portugal. With 50 direct employees and many external service providers, it offers a diverse range of training courses from auto-mechanics, mechanical cargo handling, and welding, to information systems and telecommunications.

Its 700 students comprise employees from its supporting companies and the unemployed public, be it students seeking their first jobs or those wanting to retrain. By offering both consulting and training, ATEC aims to make companies more competitive, not only at regional and national levels but also in European and international arenas.

The academy had a variety of business challenges. Efficient communication is essential, but the organization's previous system was solely voice-based and no longer met its needs. So ATEC wanted to introduce an integrated collaborative solution for employees and students at all company sites.

ATEC also wanted to streamline operations by introducing videoconferencing to reduce travel costs and time for meetings. These regularly involved coordinators travelling to Lisbon from across the country. Another key challenge for ATEC was to constantly grow its business by attracting new investors, in particular by extending into Africa.

"To respond to these challenges, we needed to develop attractive training offers, optimize work and communication between locations, and make available innovative equipment and techniques," says ATEC IT Manager, António Abelha.

> "Our experience with Cisco as a long-time customer in the networking area has been extremely positive, and we trust Cisco solutions."

António Abelha
IT Manager
ATEC

Solution

ATEC had a relationship with Cisco going back four years, which included fixed and wireless networking with Cisco Catalyst® switching, Cisco® wireless access points and wireless controllers, and Cisco Prime Network Management. It had also implemented Cisco Nexus® data center switches and Cisco Secure Access Control Server.

When the academy decided to move into the collaborative workspaces, it looked no further than Cisco. Abelha says: "Our experience with Cisco as a long-time customer in the networking area has been extremely positive, and we trust Cisco solutions." The complementary Cisco Borderless Network and Collaboration architectures, offering unified collaborative tools over a single, unified network, were exactly aligned with the ATEC technology vision. "The adoption of collaborative services will improve our company's productivity and allow greater employee mobility," says Abelha.

ATEC used Cisco Gold Partner, CilNet, to implement its new collaboration solutions. CilNet took a consultative approach, working with the academy to develop a business strategy based around Cisco solutions, demonstrating the benefits of the technology and how it would fit with the ATEC environment. CilNet also provides ongoing product service and support with backing from Cisco.

The solution features Cisco Business Edition 6000 (BE 6000), which offers a wide range of unified communication and collaboration capabilities integrated on a single-server solution. It was installed at all six ATEC sites. Business Edition 6000 was a good fit for ATEC because it offered an affordable and scalable solution for moving from outdated telephony systems to unified communications.

Cisco Jabber™ instant messaging, presence, voice, and video are now in use at all ATEC offices and Cisco TelePresence® SX20 videoconferencing is installed at two of those locations. ATEC uses Jabber video with telepresence to provide high-definition video communications to more people, on more devices, from more places. The company currently has 80 Jabber users. Directors use Jabber on iPhones and iPads, and others access via desktops. Directors, teachers, and coordinators use the video and instant messaging functionalities, while others use just voice and instant messaging. ATEC also benefits from video-enabled Cisco Unified IP Phone 9900 Series.

Voice and video connectivity is enabled with the Cisco Unified Border Element (CUBE) session controller, and ATEC has also implemented Cisco Unified Contact Center Express for ten agents, and Cisco Instant Voice Response (IVR) for its internal student call center.

Results

"The main benefit we have seen from the use of Cisco TelePresence is increasingly better communication and collaboration between our employees, particularly at the headquarters in Palmela and the delegation in Oporto," says Abelha. "At the moment, telepresence is used by all employees, including corporate communications, commercial, and coordination departments."

Cost savings on business travel between ATEC locations is significant. Travel has been reduced because meetings are now run over telepresence, allowing better and faster communication between departments and customers, and enabling improved collaboration among trainers preparing their daily work.

Using the Cisco collaboration platform has eliminated wasted time and boosted staff productivity. It has also extended the academy's reach, enabling it to sell courses to new customers in new territories. More personal interactions are improving communication, not only between ATEC locations but also with its main sponsors.

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IT Manager
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"Cisco Collaboration has increased our competitive edge and is helping us transform our business while reducing costs," says Abelha. "Another less obvious but very important result is that the Cisco platform is helping foster our next generation of IT talent."

Cisco Unified Contact Centre Express enables ATEC to improve student support by providing an internal contact center, which streamlines student contact with teachers and reduces waiting times when information is needed. The contact center runs on one contact number and directs student inquiries to the right place across all seven sites. Cisco has also created additional functionality for the contact center, enabling it to generate reports to track missed calls and call resolution times.

Another advantage for ATEC was the financing offered through Cisco Capital. This enabled the academy to receive the full benefits of implementing its technology now while spreading the cost over a number of years.

Next Steps

ATEC plans to extend the use of Jabber to its students and investigate the use of Cisco WebEx Meetings for distance learning. The company is also considering creating a separate disaster recovery data center.

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco solutions mentioned in this case study, please go to: www.cisco.com/go/collaboration

For further information on Cisco Capital financing solutions, please go to: www.ciscocapital.com

Product List

Collaboration
- Cisco Business Edition 6000
- Cisco Jabber
- Cisco TelePresence
- Cisco Unified Contact Center Express
- Cisco Interactive Voice Response
- Cisco Unified Border Element
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 7900 and 9900 Series