

Driving More Flexible Working Environment

Customer Case Study



Dutch trades union saves money and increases efficiency with new network and collaborative technologies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: FNV Bondgenoten



Industry: Trades Union

Location: The Netherlands

Number of Employees: 1000

Challenge

- Reduce operating expenditure
- Introduce new flexible working environment

Solution

- Cisco Borderless Network architecture, including fixed and wireless connectivity
- Cisco Collaboration architecture with successful pilot projects for Cisco Jabber and Cisco TelePresence
- Cisco Unified Data Center architecture using Nexus 5000 and 2000 Series Switches

Results

- Yearly operational savings of a minimum of €4 million
- Increased staff productivity through new work-anywhere concept
- Modern work environment attracts more high-caliber employees

Challenge

FNV Bondgenoten is the largest trades union in The Netherlands, with more than 470,000 members in the retail, services, industrial, metal, agriculture, technical, and transport sectors. Some 20,000 of those members also work for the union in an official capacity. The union employs 500 staff at its Utrecht headquarters and approximately 100 people at each of five branch offices spread across the country.

In deciding to upgrade its aging network equipment, FNV Bondgenoten wanted to introduce wireless networking and videoconferencing to support more flexible working to reduce travel and real estate costs, increase productivity, and improve recruitment options.

“A lot of our Cisco equipment was between six and ten years old. It worked fine, but we wanted to upgrade it because as an infrastructure gets older the chances of failure increase,” says Joris Sterk, consultant, technical infrastructure at FNV Bondgenoten. “Also, many of our people spend most of their time on the road, and we have also introduced a new work anyplace, anytime concept.”

FNV Bondgenoten had run a successful pilot of the new flexible working methods, with 400 staff using Apple iPads, so it needed a new wireless network to expand and develop the project. “Our goal is for 85 percent of our employees to work within a flexible workspace and we’re redesigning our working environment to achieve that,” adds Sterk. “We considered other suppliers, but we have learned to trust Cisco solutions, and that weighed heavily in their favor,”

Solution

Working with its trusted advisor and Cisco partner AVIT Systems, FNV Bondgenoten upgraded its LAN with a core of four Cisco Nexus® 5000 Series Switches and eight Nexus 2000 Series Switches. The switches are equally divided between two data centers to deliver a fully redundant solution for high availability, connecting to 54 Cisco Catalyst® 3750X Series Switches at the periphery also providing connectivity to the wireless LAN.



“The best people need freedom. They want to use the device they prefer, and they want to work from anywhere. With Cisco collaboration solutions, such as Jabber on iPads, we have created a modern work environment that enables us to recruit the right staff.”

Joris Sterk
Consultant, Technical Infrastructure
FNV Bondgenoten

The wireless environment consists of two Cisco 5508 Wireless Controllers and seventy-six Cisco Aironet® 3500 Series Access Points. Featuring Cisco CleanAir® technology, these tools deliver high-performance connectivity by intelligently avoiding interference. This capability was particularly valuable in the FNV Bondgenoten headquarters, which occupies an old building with lots of structural steel, located in an area of intense wireless activity.

Connectivity to the WAN is enabled by Cisco 2800 Series Integrated Services Routers, with inbuilt firewalls for network security, while Cisco Catalyst 3750X Series Switches power the LANs at district offices.

The union is also piloting Cisco Jabber™, starting with 40 iPad-equipped staff then potentially deploying to 1000 Jabber clients. “What made Jabber better than the competition was its open standards,” says Sterk. “Our technical people had problems getting a competing package to work, because it had too many building blocks. We just felt that Jabber was the better product.”

Planning to use Jabber to promote videoconferencing, FNV Bondgenoten particularly sees the technology as useful for its constant meetings, which currently require staff to travel to headquarters from all over the country. Increased collaboration through videoconferencing will kick off with a pilot of Cisco TelePresence®. The strategy is to start with a simple implementation, then gradually add increased functionality.

Results

One of the main aims for FNV Bondgenoten was to reduce cost, and introducing wireless mobility has enabled the union to achieve that goal. “There was an excellent business case for our new working environment project,” says Sterk. “The cost of renting offices is high, but most of our people spend a lot of time out on the road, so it made sense to try and reduce both rent and power charges. We estimate the annual saving to be a minimum of four million euros.”

Introducing flexible working with iPads and Cisco wireless connectivity also increases staff productivity. “People always have easy access to email and documents wherever they are, which reduces travel back to the office,” says Sterk. “They take the iPads into meetings to make notes, and we also scan in documents, which cuts the use of paper and lowers print costs.” Furthermore, with Cisco Jabber installed on their iPads, staff will be able to collaborate with each other and join video conferences from virtually any location.

Introducing new ways of working will also enable FNV Bondgenoten to attract more high-caliber people. The union sees the working environment as increasingly important to young people, even ranking alongside salary as a reason for joining a company. “The best people need freedom,” says Sterk. “They want to use the device they prefer, and they want to work from anywhere, anytime, anyhow. With Cisco collaboration solutions, such as Jabber on iPads, we have created a modern work environment that enables us to recruit the right staff. Also, we are a union, so we have to look after our own employees.”





For More Information

Learn more about Cisco Borderless Networks, go to:

www.cisco.com/en/US/netsol/ns1015/index.html.

Learn more about Cisco Collaboration, go to: www.cisco.com/go/collaboration

Product List

Borderless Network

- Cisco Catalyst 3750X Series Switches
- Cisco 2800 Series Integrated Services Routers
- Cisco 5508 Wireless Controllers
- Cisco Aironet 3500 Series Access Points with CleanAir technology

Data Center and Virtualization

- Cisco Nexus 5000 Series Switches
- Cisco Nexus 2000 Series Switches

Collaboration

- Cisco Jabber
- Cisco TelePresence



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