

Global IT provider keeps staff connected and reduces six-figure travel costs by 10%



Key points

Business need

To keep staff connected during rapid expansion, increase productivity and operational efficiency, and reduce its six-figure monthly travel expenditure.

Solution

Pentana uses Cisco Unified Communications Manager for streamlined collaboration across premium voice, video, mobility, conferencing, instant messaging and presence.

Benefits

Provides a 10 percent reduction in travel costs and improves employee productivity, resulting in faster client response times.

Established in 1974, Pentana Solutions develops computer systems for automotive dealerships. The company is headquartered in Melbourne and has around 450 employees in its 12 offices across Asia, Australia and Europe. Pentana is the largest provider of enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems for the automotive industry in the region, offering the latest hardware and software as well as consulting, training, support and product development services.

Business need

Pentana Solutions is the fastest growing supplier of computer systems to the automotive industry in the Asia-Pacific region. To support its rapid expansion, Pentana recently acquired information systems businesses in Italy and the Netherlands.

“We had fallen into the same trap as a lot of other companies – using email to communicate all the time,” explains Sean Brown, Chief Information Officer, Pentana Solutions. “It was a slow and inefficient way to converse.

“I had to travel once a month, and it meant abandoning the other 250 employees in the office. I really wanted people to pick up the phone and to see the other person, because a five-minute call can solve a problem much faster than 20 emails.”

To encourage mobility and productivity, Pentana realised that it required a collaboration technology platform. It wanted to make video available on every employee’s desktop and provide state-of-the-art videoconferencing capabilities.

The company also wanted to reduce its travel costs, which ran into six figures every month.

To support the company’s rapid growth, any new end-to-end collaboration infrastructure had to allow Pentana to quickly and easily add users and incorporate newly acquired companies.

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– Sean Brown,
Chief Information Officer,
Pentana Solutions

Solution

From 2011 to 2013, Pentana Solutions worked with Comscentre to implement a centralised collaboration and videoconferencing architecture based on a range of Cisco technologies. Comscentre is a Cisco Advanced Unified Communications Partner and Master Managed Service Provider.

The implementation is based on Cisco Business Edition 6000 – an integrated platform for medium-sized enterprises that offers collaboration features such as premium voice, video, mobility, conferencing, instant messaging and presence.

Comscentre installed Cisco Unified IP phones and Cisco TelePresence at Pentana’s head office in Melbourne in 2011, followed by the company’s other Australian offices in early 2012.

Pentana also rolled out the unified communications client, Cisco Jabber, along with personal virtual meeting rooms to enable senior managers to videoconference with each other from anywhere in the world. Pentana aims to extend these technologies to all its offices globally in 2014.

The company also implemented Cisco Unified Contact Centre Express in its head office, and in 2013 expanded these capabilities to its Philippines office.

In mid-2013, Pentana deployed additional Cisco CallManager clusters, first in its head office to service its Asia-Pacific offices, with European offices to follow soon after. An intercluster trunk (a specially configured SIP gateway) routes calls between the clusters over an IP cloud, providing free calls between offices.

Benefits

10% reduction of six-figure travel costs

Advanced video conferencing capabilities have enabled Pentana Solutions to reduce its travel costs by 10 percent, which previously ran into six figures every month. Staff in different locations now hold face-to-face meetings using TelePresence.

The uptake of TelePresence has increased dramatically, particularly since the rollout of personal virtual meeting rooms, with the company reaching 860 TelePresence hours in the second quarter of 2012.

“By reducing our travel costs and providing free VoIP and video calls between offices, Cisco’s collaboration platform is already starting to pay for itself,” says Brown.

Improved on-the-go productivity

Since Pentana implemented the Cisco Unified Communications Manager platform, TelePresence has become a crucial to the way the company does business. Management and operational teams around the world have been brought closer together, because they can use the system to meet whenever the need arises.

“It’s much easier to get on TelePresence than fly someone to Thailand or the Netherlands,” says Brown. “When senior managers are travelling overseas, we always use TelePresence to dial into our executive meetings. We never stop a meeting because someone’s not here.”



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Client response times reduced from days to minutes

According to Brown, the most widespread benefit is fewer emails and faster response times.

“Instead of sending an email and waiting a day for the response, now we can just pick a phone, or get on Cisco Jabber, have five-minute conversation and get things done,” says Brown. “Our clients benefit from the fact that we can respond even more quickly to their needs.”

Managed services keep systems running

Using Comscentre’s managed service to administer a single contact centre, videoconferencing and wireless solution allows Pentana’s in-house support team to remain lean and agile.

“We have a small infrastructure team that’s focused on our external network and infrastructure,” says Brown. “We support about 44,000 users every day and about 800 servers outside our network. I didn’t want to put on new staff just to look after phones. That’s why we’re using Comscentre’s managed service. These people are the experts. We just want it to work, and it does.”

Products and services

Cisco Business Edition 6000
Cisco Unified IP Video Phones 8941
Cisco Unity Connection
Cisco Unified Contact Center Express
Cisco Agent Desktop and Quality Management
Cisco WebEx Meeting Centre
Cisco TelePresence (MX200 and SX20)
Cisco Jabber

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