

Digital Platform Proves Critical to Growth of Leading CPG Company

Executive Summary

CUSTOMER

Global Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) Company

INDUSTRY

Retail

CHALLENGES

- New leadership team needed effective way to communicate new growth plan to quickly align senior management and connect with employees

SOLUTIONS

- Phase 1: Deliver live video and VoDs to senior management and company's 30,000 knowledge workers via intranet; create "meeting in a box" for managers to communicate with field employees
- Phase 2: Extend live video and VoDs to 450 facilities managers
- Phase 3: Extend live video and VoDs to remaining knowledge workers at sales centers and remote sites
- Phase 4: Provide employee access to company's intranet and executive audio / video podcasts via kiosks and flat-panel displays

RESULTS

- 232 TelePresence hours logged
- 157% increase in number of executive communications
- 2 million intranet page views
- Postage costs cut by \$350K

Background

Over the last four years, a multibillion-dollar consumer packaged goods company led by a new executive management team introduced a leadership agenda to support an aggressive growth plan. The company had the foresight, staying power, and partnership with Cisco® to build out a digital footprint that would address myriad opportunities and provide the foundation for extending and enhancing the platform's capabilities.

Challenges

When the new leadership team joined the company, it needed a revised corporate strategy and, just as important, an effective way to communicate it. Without a cohesive communications plan, the leadership team would not be able to align senior management quickly or connect with employees across the globally dispersed organization. A high percentage of its employee base was "deskless" workers—those who worked in the facilities, or those on the road servicing customers daily. It was critical to reach this group to engage, align, and motivate them. Innovations in technology and technology adoption created opportunities for the company to meet these challenges.

Solutions

With help from the Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG), the company developed an executive communications strategy that enabled the leadership team to deliver its agenda, engage with employees across the company, and align them with the company's strategy. Cisco IBSG's recommendations included Cisco's own successful internal executive communications process based on Cisco Unified Communications solutions, but targeted specifically to the customer's own opportunities, challenges, and culture.

A custom three-year roadmap was then developed. It defined a four-phased approach, with the first phase delivering live video and video on demand (VoD) to senior management and to the company's 30,000 knowledge workers via its intranet; and a "meeting in a box" that enabled managers to communicate messages to field employees.



Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG)

"Cisco's IBSG team has been a valuable partner to us, helping us connect technology and collaboration tools with a comprehensive communications strategy for our business leaders to engage with employees in a more meaningful way and drive efficiency and effectiveness throughout the company."

Director of Collaboration
& Social Media
Development
CPG Customer

In 2007, just six weeks after the company approved Cisco IBSG's final recommendations, the CEO spoke to more than 200 senior managers via a live feed for the first time. Using live broadcast technology was a huge step for the company in improving employee engagement. Immediate feedback through a management survey was overwhelmingly positive—nearly 90 percent of employees said they were satisfied with the new communications approach and felt they understood the company's strategy better and could effectively deliver the message to their teams. The ability to see and listen to the CEO via live video or audio instantly made the connection more personal, more real, and more actionable. In addition to sharing the company's strategy in real time, the CEO's message throughout the organization was now consistent.

The success of Phase 1 led to a three-year journey that followed Cisco IBSG's recommended roadmap. During Phase 2, live video and VoDs were extended to 450 facility managers at nearly 400 sites. The same capabilities were extended to remaining knowledge workers at sales centers and remote sites in Phase 3.

The company's leadership team deployed the Cisco Application and Content Networking System (ACNS) and Cisco Wide-Area Application Services (WAAS) devices to remote locations to enable the entire employee population to watch VoDs via a new global employee intranet. The intranet continues to carry executive messaging and overall business updates via the video network. As a result of these enhancements, a broader group of employees is more engaged and connected with the company's operating framework.

Phase 4 enabled deskless employees to access the company's intranet and executive audio and video podcasts via kiosks and flat-panel displays at various facilities. They were also provided with home access to the intranet. During this phase, the company built seven Cisco TelePresence® locations to quicken the pace of business and align the company on winning strategies.

Much of the communications content—including companywide news, executive communications business updates, product launches, and messaging from the company's Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability initiative—was driven by Cisco's Digital Media Systems team, who worked with the company on content strategy.

Four new technology tools are being used to drive effective communication bidirectionally across the company:

1. **Cisco TelePresence.** TelePresence was the first technology deployed and would become the centerpiece of a flexible platform that delivers a variety of information to a culturally diverse organization. TelePresence is used by executives to communicate with peers and suppliers, and to conduct specific meetings. For example, the company employed TelePresence to hold a roundtable in March 2011. Facilitated in London, the meeting was held with 25 stakeholders participating from seven countries, greatly minimizing the carbon footprint for the event. The technology is an important factor in staying connected with U.S. headquarters

and conducting weekly staff and senior management meetings across geographies. Quarterly results are also communicated via live video internally.

“TelePresence has become so popular so quickly that I now need to schedule some meetings a year in advance,” says the company’s director of IT Communications. As of December 2010, 232 hours had been scheduled in TelePresence sessions across all seven systems.

2. **Digital Signage.** Seventy-three digital screens are now installed across 48 facilities to communicate a combination of global, country, and site-specific content to employees in five local languages.
3. **Blogs.** Because the company is multilingual, it must take a different approach to facilitating its executive communications strategy to reach all employees. Local management teams are increasingly using blogs to connect with employees and highlight examples of “how company strategy in action” works in their countries.
4. **Kiosks.** To reach as many employees as possible, 76 kiosks are also available across five countries for non-desk-based employees such as production workers to catch up on the latest blogs, intranet content, and video communications. The kiosks also provide self-service tools in local languages that enable employees to update human resources-related information or access their pay slips online, for instance.

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Director of IT
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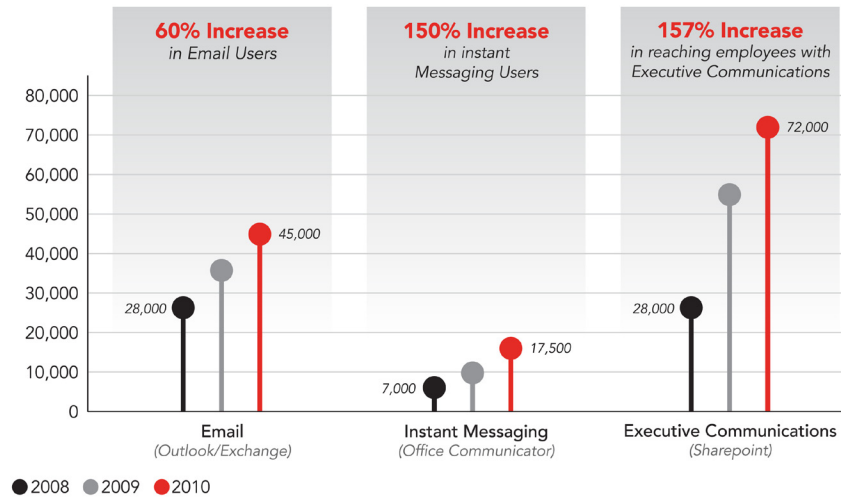
Results

The company had the foresight to invest in technologies whose benefits can be difficult to quantify (some results from employee feedback are simply intuitive), and it did so at a challenging time in its history, demonstrating strong leadership.

The ability for the organization to connect through video has played a pivotal role during key company announcements. Connecting managers and employees virtually has created better understanding of important changes to the company’s structure, along with providing forums for discussion. The company has developed a robust channel and content strategy, and is evaluating the best mix of solutions for its complex cultural and geographic needs. As the company becomes increasingly multilingual, generating real-time consistency of messaging will become even more important. Similarly, employee comfort with “two-way” social dialogue such as blogs differs from country to country, and the ability to connect employees using the right collaboration tools will be key.

Figure 1 illustrates the increase in usage of three collaboration tools from 2008 through 2010.

Figure 1. Number of Employees Reached with New Capabilities.



Source: CPG customer, 2010

Usage of these technologies resulted in significantly improved reach and speed of communications bidirectionally to a dispersed workforce. Further benefits include an uptake in intranet usage. For example, as of December 2010, the company recorded more than 2 million intranet page views, with the average visit lasting 15 minutes.

In addition, employees can also make changes online to their personal data, such as updating their contact information and accessing their pay slips at any time via kiosks. This latter capability resulted in a significant drop in standard mail charges and the number of mailings: mail charges decreased in 2008 to US\$350,000, and mailings dropped from 36,870 to 4,421. Prior to online pay slips, employees did not receive confirmation of their direct deposits. Once the company provided them with access to pay slips online, they did not have to send confirmations through the mail.

“Cisco’s IBSG team has been a valuable partner to us, helping us connect technology and collaboration tools with a comprehensive communications strategy for our business leaders to engage with employees in a more meaningful way and drive efficiency and effectiveness throughout the company,” says the company’s director of collaboration & social media enablement.

Next Steps

A Communications Council comprised of company executives and the CEO chartered and approved a three-year platform build-out and will steer the next phase of the company's communications and collaboration initiatives.

Cisco IBSG is helping the company develop a roadmap for the next three years. A "One Cisco" team was assembled to identify how to develop and implement the next layer of capabilities onto the digital footprint to extend it beyond internal use to include customer interactions. Workshops focused on adding new capabilities and surveys designed to gauge employee awareness, adoption, and usefulness of the digital platform will be conducted over the next eight to 12 weeks.

More Information

Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG), the company's global consultancy, helps CXOs from the world's largest public and private organizations solve critical business challenges. By connecting strategy, process, and technology, Cisco IBSG industry experts enable customers to turn visionary ideas into value.

For further information about IBSG, visit <http://www.cisco.com/go/ibsg>.



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