Cisco IBSG Helps Swiss Post Boost Salesforce Effectiveness

Executive Summary

CUSTOMER NAME
Swiss Post

INDUSTRY
Postal services, logistics, and finance

CHALLENGES
- Swiss Post needed to transform itself from national postal service to participant in a deregulated, highly competitive, international market.
- Enterprise customers were looking for a one-stop shop in provisioning logistics services on an international level.
- Top management had high expectations of increased revenues in the new, competitive market.

SOLUTIONS
- The network is the platform for new communications and collaboration tools.
- Cisco IBSG identified the 10 most impactful ways Swiss Post Logistics could boost sales productivity.

RESULTS
- Salesforce productivity increased 15 to 20 percent.
- An average of eight hours per week per person were saved through meeting virtualization.
- Communication became more effective both internally and with customers, and a more virtualized meeting style increased the speed of decision-making.

Business Challenges

Swiss Post, once a national postal distribution agency, has evolved into an organization that provides document logistics services to corporate customers and financial services to companies and individuals. Swiss Post operates in 14 countries with a workforce of 44,178 (2008), relying on technology to help extend its market reach, compete effectively, and provide ever-expanding services to its customers.

Recognizing the importance of voice over IP (VoIP), Swiss Post started to install Cisco IP phones throughout its organization in 2007. The rollout of IP phones reached the salesforce of PostLogistics (the logistics services provider for enterprise customers with its approximately 100-person salesforce, spread over 15 locations across Switzerland) in 2008 and continued into other areas of the organization. Although Swiss Post had this and other technology tools at its disposal, PostLogistics still used in-person meetings as the primary means of internal and customer meetings, and emails were the primary vehicle for executive communications. Swiss PostLogistics was uncertain whether it could meet the company's aggressive revenue expectations using traditional communications and collaboration tools.

Solutions

The Zurich office of the Cisco® Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG) invited representatives of the Swiss Post leadership team to view a demonstration of how Cisco communicates and collaborates, using advanced Unified Communications technology and a variety of Web 2.0 collaboration tools. They showed how effective web conferencing and Cisco® TelePresence (a high-definition audio and video conferencing technology) can be in interfacing with customers or collaborating internally. They also demonstrated how executives communicate Cisco's direction to employees through video on demand (VoD), podcasts, and other tools.

Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG)

Dr. Christian Kubik, head of marketing and sales for Swiss PostLogistics, was impressed by Cisco's culture of collaboration. "We knew we had a lot of untapped technology, but we needed some ideas about how to best implement it. We liked Cisco's collaborative culture, and asked IBSG to identify the areas where we could benefit the most."

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> Swiss PostLogistics

Cisco IBSG interviewed 30 sales and sales support people from Swiss PostLogistics about their current way of doing business internally and externally. Their means of working was fairly traditional—using the phone and traveling to face-to-face meetings. IBSG identified 50 areas where the PostLogistics salesforce could apply new communications and collaboration technologies. The top 10 ideas were selected for their ability to quickly impact salesforce productivity, and these were presented to the Swiss Post steering committee that had been organized to guide evaluation and implementation of new communications and collaboration tools.

Ten salesforce teams were established, each testing one of the top 10 ideas. With Cisco IP phones already installed, the fundamentals were in place for implementing new tools. The challenge was to create new behaviors, creating a culture of communication and collaboration around the new tools. Sales leaders began to hold virtual team meetings using web conferencing. Account managers began to use videoconferencing with customers.

Cisco IBSG recommended that the leadership team act as role models. Stefan Regli, head of sales, Swiss PostLogistics, began producing and distributing his own VoD messages and virtualized his standing meeting with direct reports. "I was enthusiastic from the start about using these tools, but they were easier to use than even I thought. Others began to see how simple and effective these tools were, and began to experiment with them, too," says Regli.

Instead of traveling to all of Swiss Post's locations to educate the salesforce, product managers began creating VoDs. The VoDs were available over the network for salespeople to watch at their convenience, enhancing the dissemination and consumption of training material. The sales teams began making VoDs to present proposals to customers.

Results

The 10 salesforce pilot groups quickly adopted these new ways of communicating and collaborating. One person was selected from each group to be an "ambassador" for the team's tool to others in the sales organization and beyond. "The younger employees were perhaps the most adept," comments Dr. Kubik. "But once people realized the tools were simple to use and highly effective, the tools were widely adopted within the sales organization. Having members of their own group advocating for the new behaviors was an effective means of making a change in the culture."

Regli kept metrics on the impact of this new collaborative culture in the sales department. "We experienced a 15 to 20 percent increase in productivity," he states. "We saw much of that in reduced travel time. The time we gained—about eight hours per person per week—went into working directly with customers, which also contributed to an increase in sales effectiveness."

Dr. Kubik concurs and adds, "Using web conferencing for team meetings not only saved time—we exchanged information and ideas quicker and more effectively, achieving more rapid decision-making compared to voice conference alone."

Salespeople were now able to form virtual teams to respond to customers, tapping into the resources best suited to the job. This enabled them to communicate and collaborate from any location—a distinct competitive advantage in the sales process in time-critical situations.

Next Steps

The Swiss PostLogistics sales organization experienced these advancements within one year of launching the 10 pilot programs. Cisco IBSG will deliver a new roadmap for extending new communications and collaboration approach and tools to the entire salesforce and to customers. Eventually, Kubik and Regli envision adoption of the new, collaborative, virtualized way of working across Swiss Post, using the same strategy of "ambassadors" who encourage and help others to learn the tools.

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Stefan Regli
Head of Sales
Swiss PostLogistics

More Information

The Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG), the global strategic consulting arm of Cisco, helps CXOs and public sector leaders transform their organizations—first by designing innovative business processes, and then by integrating advanced technologies into visionary roadmaps that address key CXO concerns.

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

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