

Coca-Cola Enterprises Accelerates Executive Communications

Executive Summary

CUSTOMER NAME
Coca-Cola Enterprises

INDUSTRY
Consumer Packaged Goods

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

- Quickly communicate company's new strategic direction
- Develop common vocabulary to ensure consistency of messaging
- Enable CEO to create personal connection with employees

SOLUTIONS

- Develop internal executive communication strategy and roadmap
- Deploy Unified Communications solution
- Use live video, video on demand, audio, broadcast voicemail, and e-mail

BUSINESS RESULTS

- Improved employee confidence; management survey shows 89 percent very satisfied: "CEO cares about me"
- Common global vocabulary, consistent executive messaging, shared understanding of goals and initiatives
- IT organization closely aligned with business unit

In the midst of rising costs, flat revenue, and the need to enhance and expand its portfolio, Coca-Cola Enterprises and its new CEO, John Brock, needed to communicate a new strategic direction for the company. However, without a cohesive communications strategy in place, Brock was unable to reach out and quickly connect with employees across the organization. With help from [Cisco®](#), Coca-Cola Enterprises developed an executive communications strategy that enables Brock to communicate his leadership agenda, engage with employees across the company, and align employees with the company's strategy.

Business Challenges

Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE) began as an amalgamation of different independent bottling companies. Today, with 74,000 employees and FY06 revenues of nearly US\$20 billion, CCE is the world's largest marketer, producer, and distributor of Coca-Cola products, operating in 46 U.S. states and Canada, as well as selected countries in Western Europe.

When new CEO John Brock joined CCE in May 2006, he found a company that had not kept pace with the rapidly changing business landscape that included shifting consumer preferences, retailer consolidation, and rising production and delivery costs. Brock quickly realized that a strategic redirection was in order. "We had a fairly significant set of issues," says Brock. "The need for change was everywhere."

Brock and his executive leadership team worked with company leaders to create a new vision and strategic priorities that formed CCE's first-ever Global Operating Framework. This framework focuses on three strategic priorities designed to help CCE realize its vision: Grow the value of existing brands and expand the product portfolio; transform the go-to-market model and improve efficiency and effectiveness; and attract, develop, and retain a highly talented and diverse workforce.



Effective Executive Communications Process Key to Success

The success of the new strategy relied on Brock's ability to get CCE's entire population onboard, from management to knowledge workers to the 40,000 field employees who deliver the products and touch the end-user customer on a daily basis. It was critical that each employee understood the company's new vision and goals and could associate the impact of their own contributions to the company's overall strategy.

"You can't win unless you know where you're going and how you'll get there, and communication is a key, strategic enabler to everything we're doing. Our overall approach to communications has been significantly influenced by our partnership with Cisco and is absolutely key to our future.

John Brock, CEO
Coca-Cola Enterprises

The existing internal communications process, however, was somewhat inconsistent and unstructured. "One of the big challenges we had in communicating our vision was that we didn't have a strategy," Brock says. "As a leader, you have to be able to connect and convey emotion to win your employees' hearts and minds. We had no consistent way to link-in globally through video, audio, or email.

CCE's executive leadership team seized this opportunity to create a more effective, company-wide communications process and established a Communications Council representing senior leaders throughout the company to facilitate a collaborative framework. The Council looked for a technology partner who could provide the right business and technical expertise and chose Cisco to guide them through the transition. Working with Cisco, CCE wanted to implement a new executive communications process before the February introduction of the company's new strategic direction—just six weeks away.

Solutions

Cisco's Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG) brought in internal resources to contribute subject matter expertise through a meeting at Cisco's Executive Briefing Center. The Cisco Digital Media Systems business team demonstrated how technology can enable the process and Corporate Positioning shared its C-Change best practice that uses communications as a change management methodology.

"After taking us through their C-Change framework, says John Downs, CCE senior vice president of public affairs and communications, Cisco helped us develop a common vocabulary which was critical to their own transformational journey. We were able to connect that in a relevant way to our own journey at CCE."

IBSG led the initiative, developed the strategies and recommendations relevant to CCE's goals, and outlined the engagement. The Cisco sales team then pulled in the Digital Media Systems business unit to help CCE's IT team execute the solution within the six-week timeframe.

"We spent a lot of time looking, learning, and listening to the way Cisco does executive communications," Brock says. "We decided that this was the way we wanted to engage with and touch our employees."

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John Downs
Senior Vice President
Public Affairs and
Communications
Coca-Cola Enterprises

IBSG then initiated a deep-dive analysis to understand CCE's business, challenges, vision, and how the company currently facilitated executive communications. CIO Esat Sezer, who joined CCE in October 2006, was initially skeptical that it could be completed in just six weeks. “We had never done live video broadcasting before,” he says. “Not only that, we were not quite sure we could pull together a model knowledge base and a technology base with the capabilities in that short period of time.”

Sezer, however, was quickly convinced when IBSG began working with both Sezer's IT team and CCE's business team to develop an executive communication framework consisting of both process and technology. “Together, we put a plan in place,” Sezer says. “Cisco brought in new technologies and we began to see how we could incorporate them into our current network infrastructure.”

Enthusiasm began to grow within Sezer's IT staff when they saw the possibilities and how they could impact success. Especially important, the initiative created a close and sustained alignment between CCE's business and IT teams, who prior to that had each operated independently.

CCE Adopts Cisco's Successful Executive Communications Approach

The recommendations combined Cisco's own successful internal executive communications process based on Unified Communications solutions, but specifically targeted to CCE's own opportunities, challenges, and culture. A customized roadmap defined a phased approach with the first phase delivering live video and video on demand to CCE's Senior Management Team. Phase One also included delivering audio over the company's intranet to 30,000 knowledge workers and a “meeting in a box” that enabled managers to communicate the message to field employees. Subsequent phases will drive automation further into the organization so that all employees will have secure access to the intranet from home or via kiosks located at each facility.

But perhaps the biggest achievement was that Cisco and CCE's IT team met Brock's mandate to have the solution flawlessly implemented before the February launch, just six weeks after IBSG's final recommendations were approved.

“Initially, we looked at other companies to identify best practices from those who might have a similar situation to CCE,” says Downs. “Then we realized we had a current IT supplier in Cisco who could also bring added value during a critical time in our company's history. Cisco has been a great strategic partner in providing us with an actionable communications framework, as well as an in-depth analysis of our processes and capabilities.”

Results

On February 12, 2007, Brock stepped in front of the video camera and spoke his first words via live feed to CCE's Senior Management Team:

"Good afternoon and thank you for joining me today. I'm coming to you live from our Boardroom in Atlanta where I am joined by members of our Executive Leadership Team. This is the first time we've ever used live broadcast technology in this format and it is a big step for CCE in improving how we interact with each other. Moving forward, we'll continue to explore ways for us to use technology to communicate with each other more effectively."

Immediate feedback through a management survey was overwhelmingly positive—nearly 90 percent of employees were satisfied with the new communications approach and felt that John Brock cared about them. The ability to see and listen to their CEO via live video or audio instantly made the connection more personal, more real, and more actionable.

"You can't win unless you know where you're going and how you'll get there, and communication is a key, strategic enabler to everything we're doing," says Brock. "Our overall approach to communication has been significantly influenced by our partnership with Cisco and is absolutely key to our future."

Not only was Brock able to share the company's strategy in real time, the message throughout the organization was now consistent. "Whether I'm in Belgium, Holland, France, Southern California, or Chicago, when my team starts talking with me about our vision, where we're heading, and how it plays into their business, it's incredibly consistent with what they've heard me say through video, audio, and email outlets," Brock says. "We now have a coordinated strategy that originates from the center and trickles down in a very clear fashion to the business units around the world."

To launch its business transformation journey, CCE had to establish a company-wide Global Operating Framework and rebuild its executive communications strategy. "Today, everybody sees a big difference at CCE in terms of communication," says Downs. "We're able to communicate quickly, we've got the speed, and we also now have the consistency of message. Video has been helpful to us because it enables John Brock to connect in a very personal way to his senior management teams." Moving forward, we are working toward providing this level of communication to all CCE employees.

More Information

The Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG), the global strategic consulting arm of Cisco, helps Global Fortune 500 companies and public organizations transform the way they do business—first by designing innovative business processes, and then by integrating advanced technologies into visionary roadmaps that improve customer experience and revenue growth.

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



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