Telecom Discovers New Level of Asset Visibility

STC saves time, reduces risk, and enhances planning with Cisco Smart Net Total Care.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name:
Saudi Telecom Company

Location: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Business Challenge:
- Lacked visibility into enterprise IT network assets
- Skilled engineering talent distracted by data-collection tasks
- Incomplete or inaccurate data slowed technical support response

Network Solution:
- Cisco Smart Net Total Care Service

Business Results:
- Reduced risk by discovering hundreds of end-of-life devices
- Reduced asset data collection time from three months to minutes
- Identified 500 devices planned for replacement

Business Challenge

The Saudi Telecom Company (STC) provides integrated mobile, fixed, and broadband communications services to more than 160 million customers, making it the largest telecommunications company in the region. STC's enterprise network supports enterprise users, offices, and customer support centers. It's large, incorporating more than 4000 devices. It's also incredibly complex.

In the past several years, STC has added network devices and upgraded software versions. STC uses a range of Cisco partners, in addition to purchasing directly from Cisco. Partners manage the service agreements that they sell. STC had no centralized repository of equipment and service agreement data. When STC needed equipment information for technical support, contract renewals, or requests for proposals (RFPs), the IT team had to seek it out.

That meant physically collecting serial numbers and verifying equipment and OS versions in 1200 cabinets across the kingdom. The process took two to three months. It required 60 to 70 staff members. Manual processes were prone to error. And the problems didn't stop there. With incomplete—or incorrect—data, calls to the Cisco Technical Assistance Center (TAC) were frustrating. Equipment records didn't match. Some devices weren't covered. Others were no longer supported. STC and Cisco had to complete numerous versions of the RFP before they were correct.

Something had to change. Pieces of equipment not covered by service agreements posed a high risk. Skilled engineers were wasting time on manual data collection. And planning for network evolution? Nearly impossible without knowing what was installed.

Network Solution

Cisco equipment makes up the majority of the STC enterprise network, and the operations team is familiar with Cisco. So STC turned to Cisco for assistance. When the Cisco account team suggested Cisco® Smart Net Total Care Service, STC agreed to try it.

"This is clearly the right tool at the right time for us," says Hosam Bayomi, IT technical advisor for STC. "Smart Net Total Care service's automatic discovery and data-collection features are already revolutionizing our work. We will depend on it from now on."

Cisco Smart Net Total Care Service uses Cisco smart services capabilities to improve visibility into IT assets. These smart features automatically collect operational data on deployed network devices. Analytic capabilities compare that data with Cisco's deep knowledge base. STC uses the highly secure Smart Net Total Care web portal to access, review, validate, and modify service levels and device status.

Smart Net Total Care also simplifies device alerting. Now, STC receives only the alerts that apply to the Cisco devices in its infrastructure. The IT team doesn't waste time investigating alerts that don't apply to them. At the same time, Cisco devices continuously monitor their own health and notify STC of potential issues. If a serious problem arises, the device automatically generates a TAC service request. This speeds assistance and reduces the potential impact of downtime. With Smart Net Total Care, STC now has actionable intelligence, personalized information, and proactive support.

Business Results

"Cisco gave us a tool that was almost completely ready to go," says Bayomi. "In just a couple of weeks, we found almost all of the equipment in our network and moved it into the system. That alone was a huge achievement."

With Smart Net Total Care, STC brings together its Cisco networking equipment and support-contract inventory data in one place. STC's valuable engineering talent doesn't have to travel around the kingdom manually checking serial numbers. Instead, they can focus on mission-critical operational efforts. In just a few days, STC had a complete report that it quickly compared with its CiscoWorks network management system. And the IT team has better information to plan for equipment upgrades and replacements.

Accurate data will save weeks and months of time in service agreement renewal and RFP submissions. It also help ensure that support isn't delayed when needed. Accurate data also reduces risk. The IT team can be sure that equipment is covered to the right level of service. For example, customers using Smart Net Total Care often find that service agreements can be consolidated and simplified for greater cost savings and efficiencies. Mission-critical network traffic can be moved off end-of-life devices until they are replaced. Already, STC has found 500 end-of-life devices that will be replaced by the end of the year.

Next Steps

STC plans to bring all of its operating system software up to date. Many devices were running multiple software images. Some were running as many as 15. Now STC can minimize the number of installed software images to further reduce the risk of feature incompatibilities.

"We are pleased with the great support we've received from Cisco," says Bayomi. "Finally, we have the data we need to maximize our network's capabilities and be self-sufficient. We are very happy to have Smart Net Total Care."

"This is clearly the right tool at the right time for us. Smart Net Total Care service's automatic discovery and data-collection features are already revolutionizing our work. We will depend on it from now on."

Hosam Bayomi
STC/IT Technical Advisor

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Smart Net Total Care, visit www.cisco.com/web/services/portfolio/product-technical-support/smart-net-total-care/index.html.

To learn more about Saudi Telecom Company, visit www.stc.com.sa/wps/wcm/connect/english/stc/stclanding.

This customer story is based on information provided by Saudi Telecom Company and describes how that particular organization benefits from the deployment of Cisco products. Many factors may have contributed to the results and benefits described; Cisco does not guarantee comparable results elsewhere.

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