

# Network Agility Quickens Service Provisions for Kuwait Telco

Customer Case Study



Cisco Smart Net Total Care anchors Wataniya Telecom's growth with dedicated installed-base and contract management.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Customer Name:** Wataniya Telecom

**Industry:** Telecom Service Provider

**Location:** Kuwait City, Kuwait

### Challenge:

- Maintain service excellence while ramping up new data services
- Replace less efficient manual processes for tracking core network inventory, equipment maintenance, and contract renewal schedules

### Solution:

- Cisco Smart Net Total Care is an installed base management solution that includes service contract management, foundational technical services, security, and other alert notifications for Cisco products

### Results

- Reduced equipment end-of-life surveys from 2 – 3 days to just 2 – 3 minutes
- Reduced contract renewal verification from three weeks to three days
- Reduced IT human resources costs by redeploying network engineers to more productive tasks

## Challenge

Founded in 1999, Wataniya became an early innovator and leader in mobile telecom services as well as community support programs. Innovations such as a cloud-like mobile backup service in 2008 and a smart-roaming Internet service in 2010 helped Wataniya grow to where it now counts 45 percent of the Kuwaiti population as customers. The service provider also has expanded into new territories, including Tunisia, the Maldives, and a dozen other Middle Eastern countries.

Thanks to Wataniya's innovative and energetic leadership, this growth may seem to have come relatively easily. However, growth hasn't been so easy for the switches, routers, and other gear that make up the core transmission network.

"Our main challenge has been bringing up new coverage and services as customers move from voice networks to cellular technology, and from 3G to 4G data networks," says Fida Hussain, Manager of Wataniya's Core Transmission Network.

Wataniya's Cisco® based network runs very well, he says, but the company's methods of managing support contract renewals and other inventory management processes haven't kept up. As any smartphone user knows, demands for faster and better data services increase every day. To sustain customer satisfaction, a telecom provider must upgrade or install new network equipment without delay, and without risking a lapse in service coverage.

Previously, Wataniya relied on Excel spreadsheets to track inventory, manage support contract renewals, and determine end-of-life timing for network equipment. The process was slow, cumbersome, and risked mistakes due to human error.

"We often had to correlate numbers on three or four different spreadsheets that different department managers were using, and that would mean creating yet another spreadsheet," Hussain recalls. "Any time we wanted to look at inventory to



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Fida Hussain, Manager of Wataniya’s Core Transmission Network

see if it needed maintenance or a contract change we went to the spreadsheets.”

### Solution

To rectify this situation, Wataniya selected Smart Net Total Care in 2012 on the recommendation of Cisco. Smart Net Total Care works by identifying Wataniya’s total installed base of Cisco products, and then passes that information over secure links to a Cisco data center. There, Cisco software analyzes the data to determine the exact manufacturing, serial number, Cisco IOS® Software version contract, technical support, and security specifications for each network component.

Using Smart Net Total Care, Wataniya can create a variety of reports at any time. As an example, an aggregated report delivers a view of the installed base from the perspective of the company’s service contracts, and can be filtered in a variety of ways, such as device types, date ranges, and locations. This is especially helpful for budgeting and operational planning—for instance, a “last day of service” report would help the network operations team in scheduling upgrades.

To ensure an effective deployment, Wataniya called on Cisco Services. Cisco Services used a pilot program to help coordinate the Cisco and Wataniya implementation teams and collect feedback on the service provider’s expected usage, reporting needs, and value metrics. Once Smart Net Total Care was deployed, Cisco Services performed a customer value realization survey to evaluate how usage of the service by Wataniya staff compared with their expectations.

“The Cisco Services team was extremely valuable,” says Hussain. “But their help goes beyond deploying Smart Net Total Care. The services team really makes Cisco a strategic partner of ours, and that’s invaluable. They sit in on strategy meetings, and then recommend the best solutions for filling in gaps, and for dealing with the constant turmoil that goes along with a fast-growing business.”

Thanks to Smart Net Total Care, multiple spreadsheets have been replaced by a single centralized portal. “With this tool, we can go to one place to analyze in depth whatever network equipment is deployed across the Wataniya core network,” Hussain says.

Wataniya personnel can now find whatever information they need using PDF or XML reports on everything from covered or uncovered devices to highly specific hardware and operating system details. Wataniya also receives alerts on conditions such as upcoming end-of-life (EOL) dates. And because their device information is kept in synch at the Cisco data center, Smart Net Total Care can streamline the Return Material Authorization (RMA) process through more accurate location tracking.

Hussain explains, “Now when I get a call in the middle of the night, as I sometimes do, I just log into the portal and the information is right there. Before we had Smart Net Total Care, I might have had to wait until a particular spreadsheet was brought up to date, and it wouldn’t be ready until morning.”

### Results

Now that inventory information has moved from spreadsheets to a central portal, improvements in time and cost savings are substantial.

Inventory updates are greatly simplified since inventory is periodically updated at the Cisco data center and at a seed file kept by Wataniya. Previously, working

with spreadsheets, Wataniya estimates it took 90 staff days, and was a once-a-year event. Now it takes less than five staff days, and this makes it possible for the company to update inventory once a month—better for keeping ahead of the ever-present need for additional telecom equipment.

Cross-verification of equipment for contract renewals now takes two to three engineering days, compared to three weeks or more—sometimes as much as several months—when Hussain's group used spreadsheets.

“Doing manual cross-verification was so tedious and frustrating that I couldn't ask each engineer to spend more than three or four hours a day,” he says. “So I would have to engage four or five engineers for a minimum of two to three weeks. Now I can use these resources for more valuable work that benefits the business more directly.”

Smart Net Total Care also helps the network operations group identify EOL thresholds proactively, something that was difficult before.

“I'll get an alert when a device hits the threshold,” Hussain says. “I'll go to the portal, pull up the device, and then ask to see any other EOL devices. Pretty soon my presentation is ready for management. The whole process, including the presentation, may take half a day to prepare. Before Smart Net Total Care, it took four to five days.”

In addition, Smart Net Total Care pays dividends to other groups in Wataniya. Once Hussain assembles a list of needed equipment upgrades or new equipment, he sends it to management for review, and from there it goes to purchasing and, finally back to him.

“This is happening all the time,” he says. “It's like a constant loop. The difference between now and before is that now we can all look at the same information, coming through Smart Net Total Care reports, at the same time, rather than sequentially. This saves a tremendous amount of time, not just for our group, but also for management, purchasing, and any other people who need the information.”

Overall, Hussain estimates that this and other examples contribute to a substantial cost savings across all IT human resources.

The best way to compete in the cellular data services market is to innovate with new services and service packages and to keep prices reasonable, Hussain notes. To do that you need an underlying transmission network that's both robust and agile, where software or hardware can be upgraded quickly in order to support a new range of services. Hussain points to this as a major benefit of Smart Net Total Care and its ability to minimize the time and costs necessary for network changes.

“We see demand for new data services at all points across the customer market,” he says. “These go from the high end, where people might want to download tons of data, to the low end where they want to use pre-paid phones. And we want to have innovative services and packages for all of these people.”

“For instance, we're now offering a small, local roaming package that lasts for just four or five days. This is perfect for someone on a trip overseas. We have agreements with satellite carriers in other countries. It's one more way that we can be responsive to our customers, thanks to a well running and well-served network infrastructure.”

## Next Steps

Wataniya continues to work closely with Cisco Services. Upcoming will be the installation of the Cisco Security Intellisield Alert Manager for its network. Cisco Services also will continue to be a full partner in Wataniya's ongoing network planning.

"Cisco is a trusted partner and we value their participation in our planning and implementation projects," says Hussain. "They deliver what we ask, and they'll go the extra mile to help us, even if it's something that isn't part of their specific charter."

## For More Information

Find out more about Cisco Smart Net Total Care: <http://www.cisco.com/go/total>  
Learn more about Cisco Services: [www.cisco.com/go/services](http://www.cisco.com/go/services)

## Cisco Services

- Cisco SMARTnet® and Service Provider Base
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- Focused Technical Support
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