



Network Systems Solution Spotlight

Unified Communications and Centralized Data Center

Client: Reed Smith, LLP, one of the world's 15 largest law firms

Business Need

To better support its international growth initiatives and to streamline support and lower operating costs, Reed Smith was interested in consolidating its multiple servers and voice equipment in order to leverage the high availability of its centralized data center. In addition, the law offices were working with a multitude of phone set models. The high maintenance costs and time investment associated with keeping these all up to date drove the firm's decision to find a unified, consistent solution capable of supporting its geographically separated practice offices.

Reed Smith decided on Cisco as its hardware provider of choice due to the company's extensive offerings and expertise in telecommunications. The company then chose MCPc for project planning and implementation.

"Bigger and mid-sized companies were driven to get our business," said Frank Hervet, senior manager of network services and security technologies, Reed Smith. "MCPc came in with long-term vision and gave us a sense of confidence that they'd be there. The company offered a dedicated project manager and engineer to our team, along with backups that we got to meet in person. All of this, in combination with MCPc's local presence in Pittsburgh, gave us a sense of friendship, partnership and true commitment."

"MCPc completed our RFP in a timely manner and offered what we felt was the best solution for us," said Scott Grubb, manager of firm-wide telecommunications, Reed Smith. "As a customer, we are very demanding, very particular and have high expectations. We evaluated many companies for this project and selected MCPc because we didn't feel like we would get lost in a sea of customers."

With MCPc, Reed Smith embarked on a three-year strategic directive designed to migrate from a digital PBX to a VoIP solution.

Solution

After agreeing upon a global design and phone set standards, MCPc reviewed all circuit configuration and DID blocks and developed a standardized, non-overlapping global dialing plan. This allows Reed Smith's 3,200 employees to reach one another efficiently with an abbreviated interoffice dialing plan.

MCPc representatives traveled across the United States for on-site installation support and training, and also provided professional consulting for international locations. Over a two-year time period, installations were performed in Reed Smith offices in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Chicago, New York City, Los Angeles, Century City (California), San Francisco, Oakland, Washington, D.C., London, Munich and Paris, and in data centers in the U.S. and Europe.

After each site was migrated to the new Unified Communications Manager, employees were provided with training material and support sessions to ensure that all were comfortable and familiar with their new phones.

Secondary servers were deployed at larger offices, and at smaller offices, Cisco SRST (Survivable Remote Site Telephony) was used to enhance call control and ensure call redundancy.



Highlights

Due to international growth, top law firm Reed Smith, LLP wanted to consolidate and upgrade its telecommunications system. Seeking streamlined support, lower operating costs and improved international capabilities, the firm chose Cisco hardware and MCPc for the job. In the second year of a strategic plan, this Cisco Unified Communications deployment has upgraded the majority of Reed Smith's office locations to a more cost-effective and efficient telecommunications system and centralized control to only two data centers — one in the United States and one in Europe.

Benefits

- Firm-wide telecom engineers now spend less time on ongoing maintenance, freeing them for higher priority tasks.
- Consolidation offers time and cost savings through faster deployment in new offices.
- An abbreviated interoffice dial plan, dial-by-voice and other Cisco shortcuts make communications more efficient for attorneys.



As a law firm in high demand, the majority of Reed Smith offices are online and available 24/7. MCPc was careful to work within this environment to meet the firm's high expectations for delivery without disrupting workflow and communication lines during long workdays.

In total, approximately 2,900 phone sets had been deployed at time of writing (November 2010), with the remaining units to be installed over the following year.

Results

Reed Smith is well on its way to a completely updated international telecommunications system that is powered by Cisco and consolidated with two centralized data centers — one in the United States and one in Europe.

"Thus far, MCPc has met and exceeded our expectations," said Grubb. "The company's flexibility is huge. We've been under the gun for a few sites even though we're planning ahead as much as possible, and MCPc is on the ready every time."

By consolidating more than 20 different phone systems into only two clusters, firm-wide telecom engineers spend less time on ongoing maintenance. In addition, the consolidation of 22 independent systems to two reduces capital and operating costs.

The streamlined system also greatly reduces Reed Smith's time to deployment as they expand the upgrade into other office locations, and in the future as the company continues to add new locations through growth and acquisitions.

After this phase of deployment is complete, Reed Smith plans to expand the Unified Communication system into Asia as well by adding a third cluster that will support these offices.

Ongoing plans include: installing Cisco IP Communicator Software on attorney laptops so that they can always be reached at their standard office number during travel — helpful for colleagues, clients and family members, alike. Also, a cross-cluster extension mobility feature will be tested that will allow employees to be reached at a standard number from any networked phone. For example, an employee from the United States can use his or her standard number even when working from the London office.

"A three-to-five year strategic directive requires an invested partner," said Hervert. "MCPc assured us they would be, and they have been. Our account team is forward thinking and they understand our needs as they change and evolve with time. We're now looking into longer-term projects that will piggyback off this one and expect our relationship with MCPc to continue as we grow and upgrade."

If you are seeking a unified communications solution, Cisco Gold Partner MCPc is available to discuss your unique needs and develop a solution to fit your business environment.



About Cisco

Cisco Systems, Inc. is the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet. Since the company's inception in 1984, Cisco engineers have been leaders in the development of Internet Protocol (IP)-based networking technologies.

Over time, Cisco has evolved from Enterprise and Service Provider solutions to addressing customer needs in many other segments including Small, Consumer and Commercial. The network has truly become the platform for providing one seamless, transparent customer experience. As a result, Cisco and Cisco technology is changing the way we work, live, play and learn.

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