

Wycombe District Council implements customer service improvement strategy with Cisco

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CUSTOMER NAME · Wycombe District Council
INDUSTRY · Local government
COMPANY SIZE · 650 employees
BUSINESS CHALLENGE · Increase level of customer service and deliver greater value for money · Provide a single point of contact for all Council enquiries · Make Council operations and staff more efficient
NETWORK SOLUTION · Cisco Unified Contact Centre Enterprise, Arc server and Nice Voice recording in Wycombe District Council's Customer Service Centre · Cisco Unified Communications system with dual Cisco Call Manager Servers consisting of 650 Cisco Unified IP phones including 7912a, 7940 and 7960 models using extension mobility across all Council sites · Cisco Unity Messaging
BUSINESS RESULTS · Able to respond to customer enquiries faster and more efficiently · Able to handle more customer calls and increase customer service · Makes accessing Council services simpler and easier for customers · Reduces the cost of internal communications

Business Challenge

Wycombe District Council serves 162,000 people and has around 650 staff. It is in Buckinghamshire and has three historic town centres – High Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Marlow – surrounded by the scenic countryside of the Chilterns and the Thames Valley. Major companies in the area include Johnson & Johnson, Crowne Plaza, Dreams, Ercol, Sennheiser, Volvo and Phones International.

The telephone is the most common way for people in the area to contact the Council. With the combination of an old telephone system and a growth in the diversity and amount of external telephone numbers, service levels were falling and it was becoming more complex and taking too long to get information from the Council.

There were separate telephone numbers for each different service so customers would have to make several separate calls. If someone contacted the Council in different ways – such as telephone and letter – often there would be no co-ordination between these different forms of communication. In addition, there were few management statistics on customer interaction performance such as telephone response time so managers did not have a clear picture of how well the Council was meeting customer needs.

It got to the point where customers were making direct calls to individual officers overloading them with minor issues that could be easily dealt with by someone else. In addition, when a customer went to the Council for one service they would have to go to another department or even different building to discuss another Council service.

This prompted the Council to launch a strategy to improve its customer service. Wycombe Direct is a programme aimed at providing value for money to the community and introducing more effective and efficient working by the Council.

One of the key elements of Wycombe Direct was a new Customer Service Centre for managing interaction with customers. The aim was to have a single point of contact whatever the customer's enquiry whether they called the Council, walked into one of its offices or sent an email or letter. To help it develop the contact centre in the Customer Service Centre, the Council selected Cisco to provide the preferred solution.



Cllr Bill Jennings, Cabinet Member for Resources, says, “Our Officers completed a comprehensive evaluation and we felt that the Cisco’s contact centre solution best fitted our needs. The Cisco technology has proved itself in the Customer Service Centre, it’s easy for agents to use and it’s easy to manage. We are especially impressed by the ability to handle and queue calls and the wide range of web-based reporting facilities. The technology is also reliable and offers good value for money. Compared to other solutions, we just felt most comfortable with Cisco.”

Because one of the long-term strategies of local governments in Buckinghamshire is to share resources – such as finance or HR functions – it was important that Wycombe’s telephone system could connect easily with other authorities, a number of which also use Cisco Unified Communications systems.

Network Solution

Wycombe has built its new Customer Service Centre around Cisco’s Unified Contact Centre Enterprise system – an IP-based contact center solution that integrates inbound and outbound voice applications with other forms of contact such as email, fax, letters, real-time chat, web collaboration and email. It enables a single agent to support multiple interactions simultaneously regardless of which communications channel the customer has chosen.



Wycombe’s Customer Service Centre is in a new office in High Wycombe with a reception, interview rooms and 30-agents handling calls. The contact centre currently handles around 11,500 calls a month. The Cisco technology also supports two remote sites in Princess Risborough and Marlow which act as local service centres, but which are also virtual extensions of the main centre. The Council’s property repair contact centre which is on another site also uses Cisco contact centre technology.

Wycombe District Council also uses a Cisco Unified Communications system consisting of around 650 Cisco Unified IP phones for its own internal telephony.

The Council is now looking at implementing additional Cisco solutions such as Cisco Personal Assistant, Video conferencing and SMS messaging to improve customer service further. The Council may use SMS, for example, to remind customers about rent or Council Tax payment dates, or to contact Housing tenants more easily.

The Cisco solution at Wycombe District Council has been implemented by Synetrix.

“With Cisco deployed in our new Customer Service Centre, it is definitely helping the Council to improve the level of service it provides to customers.”

**Mary Humphris, Infrastructure Project Manager, Information Systems Division,
Wycombe District Council**

Business Results

One of the first and most important benefits of using Cisco’s contact centre system has been a significant improvement in customer service.

Mary Humphris, Infrastructure Project Manager for Wycombe District Council’s Information Systems Division who was responsible for implementing the project, says, “Telephone communication is very important as it’s the way most people contact the Council. People need to feel they can pick up the phone and get a query answered quickly and simply. With Cisco deployed in our new Customer Service Centre, it is definitely helping the Council to improve the level of service it provides to customers.”

Humphris adds, "It is the ability to answer the public's calls in a much faster way that makes Cisco so useful. If, for example, someone called up a Council officer's direct dial the officer could be unavailable and the caller would be passed to other people or have to call back later. Now there are dedicated agents, supported by the flexible Cisco contact centre technology, ready to respond to calls from customers immediately."

PRODUCT LIST

Voice and IP Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications System
- Cisco CallManager
- Cisco Unified Contact Centre Enterprise
- Cisco 650 Unified IP phones – 7912a, 7940 and 7960
- Cisco Unity Messaging

As well as being able to provide information to customers faster, the Cisco technology is also helping the Council to answer more calls from customers. Humphris says, "The number of calls we are handling is a lot higher. The flexibility of the technology means that we can utilise contact centre agents more effectively. When there is a high demand, such as around Council

Tax payment time, we have the right number of agents ready to respond to customer calls. In the past, because these calls were being handled within the department, they were limited with the number of staff who were able to answer calls."

The Customer Service Centre has also meant that customers can contact the Council once and have a number of different, unrelated enquiries fulfilled in one call instead of having to re-dial different departments. Contact centre staff are able to deal with most questions or issues across a whole range of Council services. But if a more detailed response is required from a departmental officer, the Cisco Unified Communications system means that any staff member can be contacted easily whether they are at their usual desk or in another Council location. The Cisco Unified Communications system lets staff log on to any phone on the network so that any call to the usual extension number is automatically routed to the temporary phone.

Features like Cisco Unified Messaging mean that staff can be more responsive to enquires because voicemails appear as alerts in their email inboxes. Staff can even see, from home, that they have a voicemail on their office telephone and can easily pick up their voicemails either via their PC or by using an external phone or mobile.

The Council has also started to reduce the amount of different telephone numbers, making contacting the Council simpler.

The Cisco Unified Communications system also means that the Council is starting to realise cost savings because calls between Council offices are now carried over the internal network rather than standard telephone lines for which the Council would have to pay call charges.

Other benefits include a much better view of what telephone lines and numbers are in use and more statistics on call volumes, duration of calls and number of calls dropped increasing information about service performance.

Technology Implementation

Wycombe District Council's new Customer Service Centre uses Cisco Unified Contact Centre Enterprise with dual Cisco CallManager servers. The contact centre also has Arc server and Nice Voice recording. Across the whole organisation, the Council uses a Cisco Unified Communications system consisting of 650 Cisco Unified IP phones including 7912a, 7940 and 7960 models using extension mobility. The solution also uses Cisco Unity Messaging.

"The Cisco technology is reliable and offers good value for money. Compared to other solutions, we just felt most comfortable with Cisco."

**Mary Humphris, Infrastructure Project Manager, Information Systems Division,
Wycombe District Council**



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