

Concessions International Gains Efficiency, Cost Reductions With Enroute Networks and Cisco Call Manager Express



Business Overview

Concessions International, LLC is a leading airport concessionaire with operations in eight U.S. airports and restaurants around the country. The family and minority-owned company has been in business for more than 30 years. Headquartered in Atlanta, Concessions International has 1500+ employees, nationally. Its mission is to be a diversified food service company recognized for providing superior guest service and offering exceptional growth and opportunity for its team members.

Business Case

As a company with many employees—and all of its service operations—distributed across the U.S., efficient remote communications for Concessions International are crucial. However, the firm had been employing the same traditional (analog) telephone system at its headquarters for 11 years. Concessions International wanted to utilize advances in Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) to implement a cost-effective, high-quality solution for both voice calls and secure, remote network access, but needed a trustworthy partner to manage the installation and hardware.

Strategic Plan

Enroute Networks was already managing Concessions International's data VPN (virtual private network), so when Information Technology Vice President Basil Banko received an invitation from Enroute to attend a luncheon seminar about VOIP connectivity to remote locations, he was immediately intrigued.

Based on its knowledge of and familiarity with Concessions International's business model, Enroute recommended Cisco Call Manager Express, a user-friendly and scalable VOIP phone system, as an appropriate choice for its operating environment. The product would be deployed initially at the Atlanta headquarters and then, after company employees mastered the features and functionality of the product, rolled out to remote locations.

"I thought it would be a great idea to start at the corporate office and move to a couple of our other locations," says Banko. "We wanted to expand on and connect all of our offices and bring the support of [our phone system] more into the IT world... and eventually reduce telephone charges, of course."

Solution

Enroute deployed Cisco Call Manager Express at Concessions International's Atlanta-based office with 45 users, enough to give management a solid feel for how the technology works in a heavily interdependent environment. The entire telephony system, end-to-end, operates using VoIP.

"I had looked at other systems, but I really like Cisco products," says Banko. "They cost more, but you get what you pay for. I like the reliability and the technology behind Cisco; knowing that the company is going to be there."

All remote locations will eventually come online, enabling calls to and from headquarters and phone-based authorizations to tunnel through the existing VPN.

The new system also streamlines telephony operations for Concessions International. "We used to have to call our other phone vendor to add a phone or change something," says Banko. "Now we can add phones and make changes ourselves."

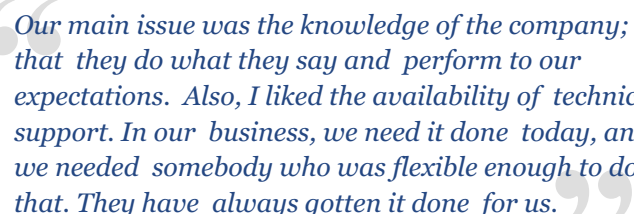
Tangible Benefits

Expanding its association with Enroute to encompass digital voice and data has helped Concessions International gain in-house command of its telephony configuration. Banko also reports that it has enabled the company to capitalize on the strengths of a solid, preexisting technology partnership.

"The responsiveness of Enroute is excellent," Banko says. "If we have a problem, Enroute personnel are immediately able to get into our system and resolve the issues," says Banko. "They are very knowledgeable about networking and routers. And, they are very responsive. The good thing about using Enroute when we decided to go with VOIP is that they already knew our network because they had been managing it. It was really a very smooth install."

While only partially deployed today, the new Cisco system is already enabling Concessions International to gain operating efficiencies and positively impact its bottom line.

"We've started to use the conferencing system, where we can eliminate our outside conference company," says Banko. "When we connect our other offices in 2010, we will realize a tremendous savings on long distance costs. This is Phase One of hopefully many to come."



"Our main issue was the knowledge of the company; that they do what they say and perform to our expectations. Also, I liked the availability of technical support. In our business, we need it done today, and we needed somebody who was flexible enough to do that. They have always gotten it done for us."

Basil Banko

Information Technology Vice President