

Law Firm Interconnects Global Offices

Reed Smith LLP is centralizing its communications systems to interconnect all offices, ensure high availability, and simplify firm growth.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
REED SMITH LLP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal • 1600 attorneys
CHALLENGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide outstanding client service, including highly available voice system • Simplify administration • Facilitate mergers and acquisitions and interoffice collaboration
SOLUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replaced disparate private branch exchange (PBX) systems with centralized Cisco Unified Communications servers • Delivered voice, voicemail, and contact center services to global offices over the network
RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced communications equipment requirements by 50 percent • Ensured excellent client service by increasing availability

Challenge

One of the 15 largest global law firms, Reed Smith LLP represents many of the world’s leading companies in complex litigation and other high-stakes disputes, cross-border and other strategic transactions, and regulatory matters. Approximately 1600 lawyers work in offices throughout the United States and in the United Kingdom, continental Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

To support international growth, Reed Smith has begun consolidating its IT infrastructure into two centralized data centers, in the U.S. and Europe. Maintaining information and services in central locations helps attorneys in different global locations collaborate. The consolidated data centers also make it easier for the IT department to ensure availability.

Reed Smith’s consolidation plan includes voice and voicemail as well business applications. Highly available voice services are strategically important to Reed Smith, whose core focus is “the business of relationships.” Previously, the firm had separate private branch

exchange (PBX) systems in each office, from three different vendors. “We wanted to replace the PBX systems with a fully redundant, centralized communications system to help ensure that our clients and attorneys could always reach each other,” says Scott Grubb, telecommunications manager, Reed Smith.

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—Scott Grubb, Telecommunications Manager, Reed Smith LLP

Another goal for centralizing the communications system was enabling collaboration between lawyers in different locations. The firm has a highly mobile workforce, with more than one-third of lawyers either working from home or in more than one office. “Clients and attorneys need to be able to easily reach mobile attorneys in any location,” says Frank Hervert, senior manager of network services, Reed Smith.

Solution

After evaluating multiple leading solutions, Reed Smith chose Cisco Unified Communications. “We needed a long-term partner with a long-term vision, and Cisco’s ongoing investment in research and development gave us confidence in their commitment,” says Grubb. The Cisco Unified Communications solution also required 50 percent less equipment in the data center than other solutions, which would reduce operational costs and energy

consumption. Finally, Reed Smith's partners like the modern look and advanced features of Cisco Unified IP phones, which reinforces the firm's image as an innovator.

MCPC Inc., a Cisco Certified Silver Partner, deployed Cisco Unified Communications Manager, Cisco Unity Unified Messaging, and Cisco Unified Contact Center Express. The same solutions are used in the U.S. and European data centers.

So far, 1900 employees in six locations receive voice and voicemail services over the network. The IT department connects all new and acquired offices to Cisco Unified Communications Manager, and the IT department is introducing Cisco Unified Communications to all other global offices as part of its strategic plan. The only equipment that a new office needs is Cisco Unified IP phones and a Cisco voice gateway.

“Part of our commitment to our client relationship is taking steps to make sure they can reach us when they need us. The redundant, centralized Cisco Unified Communications is part of that commitment.”

—Frank Hervert, Senior Manager of Network Services, Reed Smith LLP

Results

Agility

When Reed Smith acquires another law firm, the IT department often has little lead-time to integrate the new office into the enterprise voice and voicemail system. “On a certain day, callers to a newly acquired law office need to have exactly the same experience they would if they called any other Reed Smith office,” says Hervert. “Our centralized Cisco Unified Communications system significantly reduces the time to add an office to the network.”

Commitment to the Trusted Relationship

Reed Smith is the top-ranked law firm for building and maintaining client relationships with large corporations, according to The BTI Client Relationship Scorecard: Ranking Law Firm-Client Relationships, published in 2009. “Part of our commitment to our client relationship is taking steps to make sure they can reach us when they need us,” says Hervert. “The redundant, centralized Cisco Unified Communications is part of that commitment.”

Enhanced Collaboration

Compared to PBX systems, the centralized Cisco Unified Communications enables lawyers to reach each other more quickly, using abbreviated dialing and an enterprise directory that appears on the Cisco Unified IP phone display. Reed Smith is also starting to introduce advanced Cisco collaboration technologies. For example, employees in the pilot can connect with colleagues in any office simply by speaking their name, using Speech Connect for Cisco Unity. This saves time because lawyers no longer have to look up phone numbers or program speed dials. Later, outside callers will also be able to use this feature. Speech Connect can account for name mispronunciations and speakers' accents, an important feature for the global law firm.

Collaboration is also enhanced with visual voicemail. When lawyers arrive in the morning, they see a list of voice messages on the built-in display of their Cisco Unified IP phone. “Visual voicemail lets them quickly see whether they have critical messages they have been waiting for, and listen to those first,” says Grubb. “And a lawyer who is out of the office can ask an administrative assistant to look to see if a particular person has called.”

Mobility

Some of Reed Smith's administrative assistants split their time among multiple lawyers. The extension mobility feature of Cisco Unified Communications makes them reachable at the same number from any phone in the building. They just log in to a Cisco Unified IP phone to immediately personalize it with their own phone number, speed dials, and other preferences. Soon, lawyers who work in different offices will also be able to take advantage of extension mobility.

Many of the firm's lawyers receive temporary assignments in other countries for several months. Reed Smith plans to give them Cisco IP Communicator software for their laptops so that their families and coworkers can reach them at a U.S. phone number. Grubb used Cisco IP Communicator to stay in touch during a recent trip to Beijing. Cisco IP Communicator is also useful for IT employees who are on call 24 hours a day during a major project. They can make and receive calls from home, over a secure VPN connection. "They save travel time, and can remain reachable and productive when not in the office," says Hervert.

Lower Operational Costs

Consolidating the voice equipment into a centralized data center reduces capital costs as well as maintenance and support. By centralizing its existing Cisco Unity Unified Messaging servers, Reed Smith was able to consolidate from 36 servers to six. Reed Smith will need just one server after the firm consolidates to a single universal dial plan.

More Flexible Contact Center

Reed Smith's 24-hour IT helpdesk is using Cisco Unified Contact Center Express to route calls to a qualified agent. "Compared to our previous contact center, the Cisco solution provides more detailed and useful reporting," says Hervert. "It also supports business continuity because agents can work from any building."

Next Steps

"Our strategic plan states that every desk will have a Cisco Unified IP phone, and every employee will have access to centralized collaboration services," says Grubb. Collaboration services that Reed Smith is currently testing or will test soon include:

- **Single-number reach:** A single phone number will ring employees at any phone numbers they specify, including their home or mobile phones.
- **Presence:** Before calling a coworker, employees will be able to see if they are available and how they prefer to be reached, such as office phone, mobile phone, or instant message.
- **Videotelephony:** Many offices have kiosks that employees can use for videoconferencing. The IT department plans to bring video to the desktop.

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Unified Communications go to: www.cisco.com/go/unifiedcommunications.

To share best practices and unfiltered perspectives, engage with customers and other experts on the Collaboration Community from Cisco at www.cisco.com/go/joinconversation.

PRODUCT LIST

Network Systems

- Cisco Integrated Services Routers 3845, for branch offices

Unified Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unified IP Phone 7965
- Cisco Unity Unified Messaging
- Speech Connect for Cisco Unity
- Cisco Unified Contact Center Express



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