

Case Study

Cisco Moves to Activity-based Workspaces

Activity-based office environments are becoming increasingly popular as more businesses acknowledge their inherent benefits. By offering work stations based on the specific activity at hand versus each person having a designated desk, organizations are seeing an increase in productivity, collaboration, job satisfaction and decrease in real estate costs. Cisco, a worldwide leader in networking equipment, recently abandoned its traditional "cube farm" layout in its St. Leonards, Australia office for an activity-based workspace.

The global financial crisis provided a good opportunity for Cisco's Workplace Resources Manager, Michael Saddington, to take a hard look at operating expenses and their workplace strategy. On average they found 50% of their workspaces were vacant each day. Michael says they had to do some soul searching and asked themselves, "What is the office for? How do we use real estate, which is an expensive asset, more efficiently without impacting business productivity?"

Activity-based workspaces would capitalize Cisco's St. Leonards, Australia real estate, but just as importantly it would help attract and retain top talent. He said, "The activity-based environment was an investment in our future.

To remain competitive in the marketplace, we have to be in tune with the next-generation workforce, which prefers a more collaborative work style. The new graduates we want to attract into the business are turned off by the old-fashioned "cube farm" and are much more interested in modern workplace activity solutions".

Another requirement was to make sure the workspace and technology was equipped for future growth and change. "It must be robust, versatile and adaptive enough for the next decade," said Michael.

In order to provide activity-based workspaces, Cisco uses Cisco softphones and Cisco IP telephones along with Plantronics Voyager Legend UC headsets so that you can be connected to your phone no matter what workstation you are using. Michael explains that "Without headsets, we wouldn't be able to take full advantage of our activity-based environment. The practical ease of moving from different work settings depending on your requirements while remaining connected to your phone is very useful."

The change has proven to significantly save real estate costs and increase employee collaboration and job satisfaction.

Cisco Systems, Inc.: www.cisco.com

Location: St. Leonards, Australia

Industry: Technology – Networking Equipment

Number of Headset Users: 125

The Situation:

Cisco's Workplace Resources team was tasked with enhancing its workplace strategy to capitalize on real estate investments, accommodate employee collaboration and offer a modern state-of-the-art building to attract and retain new talent.

The Solution:

Plantronics Voyager Legend UC



Workspace Efficiency

Case Study

Cisco Empowers Employees to Better Serve Customers

Cisco, a world leader in networking equipment, recently underwent a building redesign in their St. Leonards, Australia office to implement activity-based workstations for a majority of the building. As a result, the space for their Technical Assistance Center (TAC), got a redesign to better fit their workplace needs.

As they moved to an activity-based workspace for the other departments, they condensed some of the buildings, including the TAC space. This provided Jim Kolokouris, Cisco's manager of technical services and support, a good opportunity to evaluate what would better service his team of engineers who handle all technical support calls for Cisco customers worldwide. They modified the desk spaces to be able to fit more desks into the building and

removed walls which allowed better access to each other. They also determined that they needed a better headset solution that would foster collaboration for solving customer issues or walking to a piece of testing equipment without dropping the call.

"We wanted to find out what kinds of products were available on the market with wireless capabilities that would encourage us to be more collaborative and allow the engineers to communicate easily by moving freely throughout the office without missing or dropping customer calls," Jim explained. Previously, the support team had larger desk spaces, higher walls and were tethered to their desks during customer calls with their corded headsets.

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The Situation:

Cisco's global Technical Assistance Center needed a technology infrastructure to equip the support team with the right tools to solve each customer's issue for the best customer satisfaction.

The Solution:

Plantronics Savi 700 Series

Workspace Efficiency

Cisco Case Study

The TAC team moved closer to each other with less walls so they needed a solution to help mitigate noise issues for both customers and the engineers themselves. It was imperative that the headsets include excellent noise-canceling microphones to block out background noise and ensure clear and focused communication with customer callers. "Customer service is a reflection of our brand, so it is essential that our customers can't hear other calls or distractions in the background while speaking with our engineers." It was also important to have a binaural headset that covers both ears and is comfortable enough to wear all day to block out the distracting surrounding noises so the engineers can focus.

They switched out the previous headsets with the Plantronics Savi 720 Series binaural DECT wireless headsets that provide up to 350 feet of distance from the desk and seamless integration with the Cisco technology being used by the TAC team. "Engineers enjoy the ability to join a conference call when another engineer requires assistance. The engineer requiring assistance can walk across the room with his headset, put it into the other engineer's docking station and the headset connects to the conference call, and then 'Bang!' they'll be talking."

Jim also looked at how the technology they chose could improve the support team's overall job satisfaction as they are on calls all day. "With the wireless headsets, they are able to walk around without dropping a customer call." Kolokouris said, "By giving our engineers access to the latest technology and the freedom to use it in a way that best meets their individual needs, our employees feel empowered to do whatever they need to do to resolve customer issues quickly, including moving to another work area or connecting with a colleague without having to hang up and redial the customer. This improves both employee and customer satisfaction."

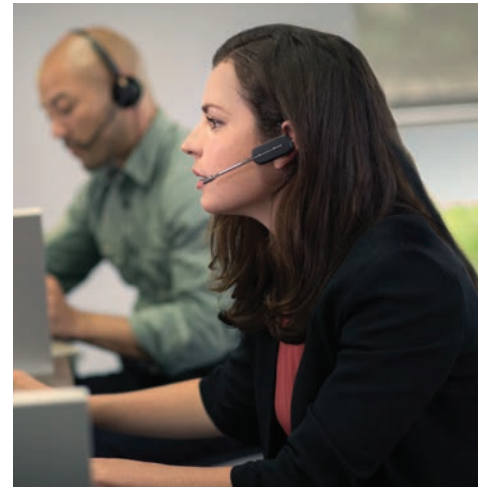
"We want our customers to know we care about them and their call is important to us," Kolokouris said. "Our new workspace is robust, versatile and adaptive enough for the future. This infrastructure gives our engineers the tools they need to best support our customers and grow our business into the next decade."

Any tips for your peers going through a similar situation?

1. "Engage with Plantronics early on in your planning process to make sure that you are selecting the right headset solution for your environment. We chose the wrong solution for our needs at first and then brought the Plantronics Sales rep in and he quickly showed us what would be best for our environment."
2. "If you are redesigning your building, make sure to do a test with the equipment in the new layout prior to placing the full order as noise levels and density can change."

"I've only heard positive things about the Savi 700 headsets. Our engineers enjoy the flexibility of moving around, especially when they require the assistance of a colleague to resolve a customer issue."

Jim Kolokouris,
Technical Services and
Support Manager



SAVI 740



SAVI 730



SAVI 710/720

