

Case Study



ANS Group implements cutting edge Cisco Unified Communications solution to reduce cost and increase efficiency

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Paul Sweeney, Managing Director, ANS Group

Company Background

ANS Group is a technology infrastructure specialist in the provision of hardware, software and 24/7 managed services to Enterprise businesses. Operating within both public and private sectors, its leading and award-winning solutions are offered in three key areas; Security & Identity Management, Unified Communications & Wireless and Storage & Virtualisation. ANS Group has over 70 members of staff with a head office in Manchester and a second office in London.

The Challenge

ANS Group needed to address the problem of increasing phone bills month after month, which was due to most calls being made from the office over mobile phones. As well as this costly issue the time the internal IT resource would spend patching movers and new starters was considerable. The internal resource was also required to maintain the remote sight in London which resulted in a lot of time wasted travelling back and forth between offices. ANS Group also has a number of remote workers who relied on their mobile phones, they needed a more efficient and less costly means of communication in order to control mobile phone cost. A solution was needed to address these business challenges and as an ever growing and highly acquisitive company ANS Group required one that was both interoperable and scalable.

The Solution

It was decided that a state of the art Unified Communications system would best meet their needs. ANS Group invested in Cisco's CallManager, an enterprise-class IP telephony call-processing system which provided voice and data over one network. The solution is scalable across remote sites and in the Head Quarters. Cisco also promotes open-standards which ensure the chosen solution is highly interoperable.

All members of staff were provided with new IP Handsets, which provide a wide range of applications such as a corporate directory. The remote office in London links into the Call Manager network over the WAN using VoIP. This enables their phones to connect to the Call Manager server at the Head Quarters in Manchester, which eliminates the need for a telephone line in the remote office and provides centralisation of communications maintenance for the IT Team.

Cisco Call Manager provides Extension Mobility, which means one number for each person. This allows for hot-desking, inter office working and working from home by simply logging into an IP handset or a soft phone. Calls to this one number can also be routed through to mobile phones and vice versa. This eliminates the need for repatching every time a member of staff moves desk and ensures that staff are always accessible at the same phone number no matter what office they are in, if they are working from home or on the road.



Business Challenges... Technology Solutions

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Another aspect of Cisco's Unified Communications solution is Unified Messaging. Cisco Unity provides this one inbox function whereby all emails, voicemails can be reached from a central location whether it is from an email inbox or from the voicemail service, which provides text to voice.

Cisco Unified Comms provides ANS Group with Video Conferencing capabilities. Web Cams that are attached to IP Handsets are auto-detected and video conferencing is started automatically if all parties have one. Video conferencing has many benefits, including cutting down travel time which in turn makes the company 'greener', helping ANS Group to adhere to its Green Policy and commitment to the environment. It also means that people's body language can be seen which is very important as 50% of communication is non-verbal.

Collaboration enables staff to communicate effectively over the network. Cisco Meeting Place enables documents to be shared securely over PCs for review. If people working in the remote office need to work on a document with someone in the Manchester Head Quarters it saves time on travel and enables decisions to be made a lot quicker, increasing customer service.

ANS Group has also implemented Cisco Presence. It collects information about a user's availability status and communications capabilities, including whether they are using a communications device such as a phone at a particular time or have Video Conferencing enabled on their system. Not only does this save time but it improves the service to customers by instantly seeing the availability of staff in any department at any given time.

Mobility has also been enabled on ANS Group's network which allows for mobile and landline costs to be cut dramatically. Any wireless on the network will pick up all mobile phone calls and send it through to Cisco Call Manager which will then decide whether to send the call down the landline or over to a QuesCom Gateway and out over the mobile network. This works in reverse with calls from the IP Handsets getting sent over the mobile network or over the landline. Both the remote office and home workers, as long as they are connected to ANS Group's network via wireless will have use of this.

Business Benefits

ANS Group have realised numerous benefits since installing Cisco's Unified Communications both immediately and over time.

- Dramatically cuts mobile phone costs
- Saves Internal IT Resource valuable time: Don't patch new starters and movers and all infrastructure stored centrally
- Cuts Travel: Saves time, money and is 'greener'
- Increase in effective communication across the business: Saves time and improves customer service
- Investment protection: Scalability across remote sites and in the Head Quarters and interoperable
- Applications: Meet me, softphone and video conferencing makes staff easily accessible and improves customer service

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