

Contact Center Provider Grows Revenue with Collaboration



Executive Summary

- **Customer Name:** Afni
- **Industry:** Business Process Outsourcing
- **Location:** Bloomington, Illinois
- **Number of Employees:** 5500

Challenge

- Refresh legacy communications infrastructure to take advantage of global growth opportunities
- Improve quality and efficiency of customer interactions
- Scale cost effectively and enable new business opportunities

Solution

- Deployed SIP-based unified communication and contact center solutions to contact centers
- Integrated inbound and outbound voice with Internet applications
- Equipped employees with integrated voice and video tools

Results

- Increased revenue by growing business and offering new services
- United global organization while reducing travel by 50 percent
- Reduced employee time required for compliance by 50 percent

Afni uses Cisco solutions to deliver exceptional customer experiences.

Challenge

Afni is a contact center company that helps global telecommunications, cable, insurance, and healthcare service companies develop meaningful and profitable relationships with their customers. With domestic and offshore locations, the privately-owned company offers 24-hour operations with the goal of providing exceptional customer experiences.

As Afni prepared to grow its business and add a new 500-seat contact center domestically and later a 1000-seat center in the Philippines to its existing 4000 agent environment, its legacy communications network and TDM ACD solution posed scalability concerns. The network was pure automatic call distributor/time-division multiplexing (ACD/TDM), limiting scalability, and did not have sufficient interactive voice response (IVR) capabilities to support automation. As the TDM network reached capacity, load balancing became a time consuming, monthly exercise for operations staff.

“We were out of space, and we didn’t have any geographic redundancy,” says Mike Schwermin, executive director of IT, Afni. “To continue to grow the business efficiently, mitigate risk of downtime, and remain competitive by embracing new capabilities beyond just voice, we needed to transition to a SIP-based unified communications and customer care solution.”

Solution

A flexible, scalable, and complete contact center solution

For the core of its new infrastructure, Afni selected Cisco® Unified Communications Manager, a unified communications call control platform. Cisco Unified Border Element allows Afni to easily integrate its IP network with clients that still use TDM infrastructures to route incoming calls. Those calls land on Cisco 3945 Integrated Services Routers with



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– Mike Schwermin
Executive Director of IT
Afni

Cisco Unified SIP Proxy for centralized routing and SIP signaling normalization.

“With Cisco, we have a flexible, scalable, and complete contact center infrastructure, as well as the ability to integrate with any Cisco or third-party solutions our clients might have,” says Schwermin. “That’s critical, because our clients often come to us with routing and integration challenges. If we couldn’t integrate with their networks, we’d have to pass on the business. Instead, Afni is able to serve as a trusted advisor and subject-matter expert to our clients.”

Afni deployed Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise, providing intelligent contact routing, call treatment, network-to-desktop computer telephony integration (CTI), and multichannel contact management. Using Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise, Afni can smoothly integrate inbound and outbound voice applications with Internet applications such as real-time chat, giving customers more options.

Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal (Unified CVP) and Cisco Unified IP Interactive Voice Response (Unified IVR) allow Afni to deliver personalized self-service to callers, while CVP offers industry-leading call control to treat calls at the most effective location. “We’re doing some exciting things with Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal such as automating password resets and compliance areas that were previously manual processes,” says Schwermin.

Cisco Unity® Connection integrates with Afni’s contact center operations, providing unified messaging mailboxes for contact center agents. Cisco Jabber® gives 2500 business users access to instant messaging, softphone/voice, video, voice messaging, desktop sharing, and conferencing, while Cisco WebEx® Training Center, Support Center, and Meeting Center facilitate on-demand collaboration and online meetings. To turn conference rooms into high-definition (HD) video collaboration environments, Afni uses Cisco TelePresence® SX20 Quick Set and Cisco TelePresence Codec C40.

To achieve maximum efficiency for outbound campaigns and policy management, Afni uses the Cisco SIP Outbound Solution, which provides a fully integrated solution to Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise. Cisco Finesse® delivers a next-generation agent and supervisor desktop to improve the customer experience while offering a user-centric design to enhance customer care representative satisfaction as well. The Cisco AnyConnect® Secure Mobility Client provides secure enterprise connectivity for remote workers. “We can treat remote agents as if the calls were being taken from within the contact center walls,” says Schwermin.

For support, Afni contracts with Cisco SMARTnet® Service. “Afni has a solid relationship with Cisco for support,” says Schwermin. “The level of expertise that Cisco brings to the table and overall responsiveness during support calls is second to none. We measure other vendors’ support by the standard that Cisco has set.”

Results

By migrating to the Cisco customer collaboration and unified communications solution, Afni was able to successfully launch efficient new contact centers in the Philippines and the United States as well as onboard home-based employees to provide the additional volume that it needed to take on new business. The company is now also offering outbound contact center services that it could not offer previously.

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Product List

Unified Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unified Border Element
- Cisco Unity Connection
- Cisco Unified IP Phone 7900 Series (both wired and wireless to include SSL VPN)

Customer Collaboration

- Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise
- Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal
- Cisco Unified Intelligence Center reporting

Collaboration Applications

- Cisco Jabber for Windows, Mac, iPhone, iPad, Android, Jabber Guest
- Cisco WebEx Training Center, Support Center, and Meeting Center

TelePresence

- Cisco TelePresence SX20 Quick Set
- Cisco TelePresence Codec C40

Routing and Switching

- Cisco Catalyst® 6500 Series Switches
- Cisco 3945 Integrated Services Routers with Cisco Unified SIP Proxy
- Cisco 1000 Series Aggregation Service Routers

Security

- Cisco AnyConnect Secure Mobility Client
- Cisco Unified IP Phone 7900 Series SSL VPN
- Cisco ASA 5500 Series Adaptive Security Appliances and SSL/IPsec VPN

Services

- SMARTnet

locked into a certain number of slots. Afni also eliminated single points of failure, with identical infrastructures at two data centers that can take the entire load if necessary.

The Cisco tools are helping Afni unite its workforce and support the changing cultural needs of mobile and remote employees. Using telepresence combined with integrated voice and video, Afni's subject-matter experts in the United States can consult with employees or take part in customer meetings in the Philippines, reducing travel costs and improving collaboration. "In the first phase of our Cisco TelePresence rollout, we estimate that we will reduce travel by 50 percent and improve our overall effective use of time exponentially by having the right players engaged in a meaningful way through pervasive video, regardless of the location," says Schwermin.

By using Cisco Unified Customer Voice Portal to automate messages that need to be read during outbound collections calls for compliance reasons, Afni reduced employee time required for these calls by 50 percent. "We were able to shave two minutes off of each call while actually improving our compliance position," says Schwermin. "It's a very simple business case that keeps paying back."

Afni is now able to automate speech and screen recordings for all calls, allowing the company to perform analytics on speech and interaction patterns to identify ways to further improve the quality of customer interactions. "Going from our legacy TDM platform over to Cisco-based SIP allowed us to do 100 percent speech and screen recordings effectively and in lock step, leveraging tools from Cisco partners," says Schwermin.

Most important, all of the Cisco tools integrate and work cohesively together. "Communication and collaboration are at the heart of what we do," says Schwermin. "If we had to cobble together a toolset from various vendors, we wouldn't be getting nearly as much value."

Next Steps

In the near future, Afni will upgrade to Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise 10.5 to take advantage of new features and functionality in reporting, courtesy callbacks, and end-to-end precision routing with large telecom clients. "Using Cisco collaboration tools has been and will continue to be instrumental in growing our business and driving the best possible customer experiences," says Schwermin.

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Collaboration Solutions, please visit:

www.cisco.com/go/collaboration.



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