

Scottish recruitment business drives rapid growth and breaks into new markets with Cisco

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CUSTOMER NAME · HR Consultancy
LOCATION · Glasgow, Scotland
INDUSTRY · Business services
COMPANY SIZE · 62 employees
BUSINESS CHALLENGE · Business expanding at 35 percent a year · Entering new markets in Scotland dependent on location presence · Improve staff efficiency and business processes
NETWORK SOLUTION · Cisco Unified Communications system
BUSINESS RESULTS · Supports rapid business expansion · Helps establish a presence in new geographical regions · Cuts new office set time from weeks to days · Helps staff to be more efficient and productive · Scalable platform for deploying additional services and applications

A Cisco Unified Communications system developed by Integral Arm, a Cisco business partner, is helping Glasgow-based HR Consultancy significantly cut the time to set up new offices and increase staff productivity.

Business Challenge

HR Consultancy is a fast-growing recruitment consultancy operating in Scotland. Over the last two to three years the company has grown by around 35 percent and now ranks in the top six Scottish recruitment consultancies. It has around 62 staff across two locations – Glasgow, the company's head office and an office in Edinburgh – covering most key industries and skill sets. The company has an ambitious growth strategy; in a year it intends to open two additional offices in Scotland and plans to expand into the UK with new offices over the next few years. Customers include Amazon, Barclays Wealth Management, Royal Bank of Scotland and HBOS, as well as many smaller businesses and organisations.

In Scotland there is a shift away from manufacturing to a more service-based economy and HR Consultancy is a prime example of a very successful, owner-managed service business. But with success and an aggressive expansion strategy comes the challenge of managing growth. The company opened its second office in Edinburgh in 2005 but it is already planning a third site due to continued success. Supporting the business

with the most effective information and communications system is therefore essential.

Recruitment is a people-oriented business and part of HR Consultancy's success is built upon its reputation for trustworthiness and the personal touch so effective and efficient communications are an important business asset. Each recruitment consultant needs their own dedicated telephone line so clients looking for staff and candidates searching for jobs can contact their consultant more or less any time and any place. HR Consultancy had been giving each consultant a separate, dedicated telephone line, but the company's growth made this both expensive and impractical.

Network Solution

HR Consultancy worked with its IT provider, Integral Arm, a Cisco SMB Select Partner, to develop a solution. Craig Findlay, HR Consultancy's finance director, says, "We spent a lot of time evaluating various options. In the end it was Integral Arm's professionalism and straight-forward approach that sold us the Cisco solution. Also, the Cisco technology offered us an integrated voice and data solution that would support both our business expansion and additional application enhancements."



HR Consultancy has deployed a Cisco Unified Communications system at its Glasgow office which is being extended to its new office in Edinburgh. This comprises Cisco foundation networking technologies supporting around 60 Cisco Unified IP phones. The phones have displays which enable users to perform basic telephone tasks such as viewing incoming and missed calls quickly as well as accessing the corporate telephone directory. Users are able to customise their own phones with features such as speed dials via the web.



HR Consultancy has a database and customer relationship management (CRM) system containing information on candidates, customers and associated business processes. The company plans to integrate this with the Cisco Unified Communications system to help staff become more productive and communications and information sharing more efficient.

Integral Arm has played a key role in helping HR Consultancy design, develop and now implement the Cisco Unified Communications system.

Integral Arm also provides on-going support and

development services such as setting up a new employee with a dedicated phone number and providing access to data applications in a matter of hours via a web browser.

Business Results

"HR Consultancy's business is developing rapidly and the ability to establish a foothold in a new region and market is critical to our growth," says Findlay. "The Cisco Unified Communications system that Integral Arm has implemented gives us a single system for all our communication needs, but critically it is helping us to grow the business by delivering high-quality communication services to staff quickly wherever they are located."

One of the key drivers for using the Cisco Unified Communications system is the ease and flexibility it offers for setting up new branch offices. In Scotland business activity tends to be region based and so it is important for service businesses like HR Consultancy to be able to establish a physical presence in a particular location. Currently, HR Consultancy is using the system to market test a new region. It has created a virtual office at its Glasgow HQ to test the viability of opening a real office in the region.

HR Consultancy is planning to open another two offices next year and the Cisco Unified Communications system will enable the company to set up those offices with full data and telephone services to each desk. HR Consultancy estimates that with the Cisco Unified Communications system it will be possible to set up a fully-functional office within two days, where previously it would take several weeks waiting for services such as new phone lines to be installed.

The Cisco Unified Communications system will also help to make staff more efficient. For example, HR Consultancy is integrating the telephony system with its CRM system so when a consultant needs to make a call, they bring up the person or job details onto a computer screen and with one click the system dials the phone number. As soon as the call is answered the consultant picks up the phone and starts the call.



"We will start to see some big benefits when we start to deploy other applications over the Cisco solution such as unified messaging and integrating telephony with our database and CRM system," says Findlay. "Consultants spend much of their time just dialing numbers. It wouldn't surprise me if they are making 50 calls a day and when you're dealing with that volume, looking up numbers on a screen, keying them into the phone and sometimes miss-keying quickly becomes a very time consuming operation. Using the Cisco Unified Communications system to make calls with just one or two clicks is certainly going to make our business more efficient."

For smaller businesses like HR Consultancy, controlling and reducing investment in support systems is a critical issue. The Cisco technology enables HR Consultancy to integrate a variety of different applications such as Internet connectivity, security and telephony into a single infrastructure making investment far more cost effective.

Another important benefit of the Cisco Unified Communications system is its simplicity. Findlay says, "Features like voice mail are important to us and simple things like the red light on the phone to show

you've received a voice mail message are really useful. When consultants return to their desks it's useful for them to know straight away that they've been contacted and need to respond. Given the volume of calls that come in, candidates frequently leave messages on personal mailboxes."

Using Cisco technology also increases resilience. If the public telephone lines in Glasgow, for example, fail the Cisco Unified Communications system will automatically re-route calls via the network connection to the Edinburgh office and then out onto the public

phone lines without any impact on customers, candidates or HR Consultancy's own staff.

HR Consultancy has already started to plan additional services and applications for its Cisco Unified Communications systems. These include enabling desktop-to-desktop video conferencing and expanding its unified communications capability so that voice mail can be read from a computer screen and emails from the phone. The company is also planning to use Cisco technologies to help staff become more mobile through using solutions such as Cisco IP Communicator which delivers all the data applications and telephone services available at the desk, to a laptop.

PRODUCT LIST

Routing and Switching

- Cisco 2851 Integrated Services Router
- Cisco 2811 Integrated Services Router
- Cisco Catalyst Express 500 Series Switches

Voice and IP Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager Express
- Cisco Unified IP Phone 7941

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Craig Findlay, Finance Director, HR Consultancy



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