

# Professional Services Firm Scales its Business with Unified Communications

e-velocity delivers responsive customer service by leveraging Cisco Unified Communications solutions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p><b>e-velocity technical consulting, llc</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Service</li> <li>• Cincinnati, Ohio</li> <li>• 15 employees</li> </ul> <p><b>BUSINESS CHALLENGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate effectively across a distributed, virtual organization</li> <li>• Respond to client telephone calls immediately</li> <li>• Defer capital investments and overhead as appropriate</li> </ul>
<p><b>NETWORK SOLUTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deployed a Cisco Unified Communications solution to improve message handling, conduct conference meetings, and receive calls offsite.</li> </ul>
<p><b>BUSINESS RESULTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended the effectiveness of the firm's virtual organization model.</li> <li>• Able to provide customers with immediate response and personalized, Web-based interaction.</li> <li>• Deferred significant investments in network operations center and dedicated help desk.</li> </ul>

## Business Challenge

Small businesses have always had the advantage of moving nimbly – and the challenge of sometimes being resource-constrained. e-velocity technical consulting llc, an expert IP Communications, IP Security, and Wireless integration services company, is no exception. A Cisco® Silver partner specializing in IP Communications and IP Security, e-velocity is experiencing fast growth based on its excellence in delivering complex network solutions. But perhaps the biggest factor driving the firm's growth, which operates virtually in several cities in the Midwest, is its responsive, comprehensive customer service – which e-velocity delivers with a team of just 12 engineering professionals.

“Whether the customer is a large Cisco integrator or an enterprise that we work with directly, one requirement is constant: when they call e-velocity,

they want to talk with somebody – right now – either by connecting with them or by leaving a message,” says Jason A. Diegmüller, partner at e-velocity. “A substantial part of our business comes from helping customers and partners address emergency situations. It is absolutely imperative that everyone at e-velocity be highly reachable, and responsive, at all times.”

That can be a challenge, with the firm's engineers nearly always engaged in on-site client work. Being customer-focused also means that the engineers' workspaces are almost always anywhere but at the e-velocity headquarters. “We are a virtual organization, with everyone working independently or in small teams,” Diegmüller says. “But to retain the cohesion necessary to grow our business, we have always recognized the importance of staying connected and communicating.”

Finally, although e-velocity's business is growing rapidly, Diegmüller and his partners are cautious about making significant capital investments. The firm's volume of work has grown to the point that a network operations center (NOC) and a dedicated help desk will be required in the near future – investments that the partners at e-velocity want to make only at the appropriate time.

**“For professional services firms, today’s business environment is high-energy, high-velocity and customer-focused. We rely on Cisco Unity and the suite of Cisco Unified Communications applications to enable our success.”**

—Jason A. Diegmüller, Partner, e-velocity technical consulting, llc

### **Network Solution**

Having installed thousands of Cisco solutions, e-velocity was eager to deploy Cisco Unity unified messaging integrated with the Microsoft Exchange 2007 platform, upgrading from Exchange 2003. Cisco Unity is e-velocity’s primary call-answering and voice-messaging system.

"Cisco Unity is a proven solution that we have been using for years. We looked at Exchange 2007 Unified Messaging. However, we have many mobile workers, and certain Cisco solution features, such as interrupted session recovery, let us gain additional productivity over what Microsoft could offer," Diegmüller says.

He and his colleagues use Palm Treo smartphones and Motorola’s Good Mobile Messaging software to synchronize their Exchange mailboxes, which also hold voicemail messages, with the mobile devices. E-mail messages and voicemail messages are both pushed to the user’s Treo. “Cisco Unity captures the Caller ID with a voicemail message and gives me a view into all of my messages, just as if I were sitting at my desktop computer. I can use the Caller IDs to determine which voicemails I need to listen and respond to first,” he says.

### **Message Monitor Enables New Efficacy in Message Handling**

He also cites the Cisco Unity Message Monitor feature as “enormously useful – and invaluable in responding to emergencies.” Diegmüller says, “The Message Monitor user interface is very simple. As a message is being left for you, Cisco Unity displays a message on your desk phone that a message is being left now, including the Caller ID. Softkeys enable you to listen in on the call or immediately take it, at which point Cisco Unity will ask the caller to please hold and then transfer the call to the recipient.

“Alternatively,” he says, “another option allows you to ask the caller if they would like to continue leaving their message or speak to the recipient. Finally, if you take no action, the Message Monitor notifies you when the caller hangs up. I can also join the incoming call into a conference with my existing call.”

### **Staying Connected with Cisco Unified MeetingPlace Express**

Cisco Unified MeetingPlace Express plays a similarly pivotal role in e-velocity’s operations. It is used to conduct weekly team meetings, supplementing audio bridge conferencing with Web-based presentations and document sharing. “Our weekly internal conference keeps everyone in the company aligned around common goals, and helps us to prepare for upcoming projects – which means there are fewer surprises,” Diegmüller says.

Similar weekly conferences are conducted with large customers, and Cisco Unified MeetingPlace Express is also used to conduct customer training. “Through Cisco Unified MeetingPlace Express I can connect to my customer – workspace to workspace – to demonstrate how particular tasks are done, while talking with them on the phone.”

**“It is absolutely imperative that everyone at e-velocity be highly reachable, and responsive, at all times. Being customer-focused also means that the engineers are almost never present together in e-velocity’s headquarters. The combination of Cisco Unified Mobility, Cisco Unity, and Cisco Unified MeetingPlace Express allows us to be responsive to clients while retaining the cohesion necessary to grow our business.”**

—Jason A. Diegmüller, Partner, e-velocity technical consulting, llc

### **Cisco Unified Mobility Reduces Missed Calls**

The final key piece of e-velocity’s Cisco Messaging solution is Cisco Unified Mobility. “When someone calls my office number, the call rings on my desk phone and up to four other endpoints, simultaneously. This is extremely valuable in three ways,” Diegmüller says. “First, it all but eliminates my chances of missing an important call. In the rare event that I am not able to take the call from the alternate phone numbers, Cisco Unified Mobility consolidates the calls in a single business voicemail on Cisco Unity. Second, I can ask callers to simply dial my office number, instead of multiple phone numbers. When I place calls from my cell phone, the Caller ID shows the office number, which creates a professional image.

“Finally, with Cisco Unified Mobility I can dynamically switch between endpoints – I can pick up a call in my car on my Treo and then switch to my desk phone when I arrive at the office. This is a great feature because the cell phone reception in my office is poor. Further I can continue my conversation on my desk phone and not have to use my cellular minutes. For all of these reasons, all of us at e-velocity think the world of Cisco Unified Mobility.”

### **Business Results**

Perhaps not surprisingly, Diegmüller and his colleagues find that e-velocity is a real-life showcase of the power of Unified Communications. “For professional services firms, today’s business environment is high-energy, high-velocity, and customer-focused. As a company we all need to be aware of what’s happening on a day-to-day basis, while remaining focused on our strategic long-term goals. And as a professional services firm we need to be responsive and available at all times. We rely on Cisco Unity and the suite of Cisco Unified Communications applications to enable our success.”

Specifically, Cisco Unified Communications solutions have allowed e-velocity to achieve three business goals:

- Extend the effectiveness of the firm’s virtual organization model by unifying each person’s workspace, no matter where they are, so that everyone can collaborate effectively.

- Provide customers with superior service by remaining highly reachable at all times, providing fast response when messages do need to be left, and personalized, Web-based training and meeting capabilities.
- Deferred significant capital investments in an NOC and a dedicated help desk. The flexibility of e-velocity's Unified Communications infrastructure, and the immediate interactions it enables, have enabled e-velocity's existing team to provide superb technical support to its customers. "Cisco Unified Communications have allowed us to scale our business without a proportionate increase in overhead," Diegmüller says. "This has a major impact on the overall profitability of the firm."

### PRODUCT LIST

#### Routing and Switching

- Cisco 871W Integrated Services Routers
- Cisco 2800 ISR Voice Gateway

#### Cisco Unified Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unity 5.0(1) (Exchange 2007)
- Cisco Unified MeetingPlace Express
- Cisco Unified IP Phone 7941G, 7961G, 7970G, and 7971G
- Cisco Unified Wireless IP Phones 7920G
- Cisco Unified Mobility

### Staying Connected at Home Offices

Foundation products such as Cisco Unified Communications Manager and secure routers play a central role, as well. "Almost two-thirds of our employees have a virtual private network [VPN] in their home. We use Cisco 871W Integrated Services Routers to establish the network and then drop an IP phone line at each house, as well," Diegmüller says. "Cisco Unified Communications Manager enables us to fully extend our employees' workspaces into their homes. This would be impossible with a PBX [private branch exchange]."

The VPNs are all part of our extended communications network, with the home office phones as endpoints. With Cisco Unified Mobility, one call rings the recipient's physical desk phone, as well as his or her mobile device, home office phone, and any other phone, such as at a customer or remote site.

"This is what the power of Cisco Unified Communications is all about," he says, concluding, "And it is why e-velocity is as proud to use this powerful technology as we are to provide Cisco Unified Communications solutions to our customers."



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