

TRUE BLUE QUALITY

BLUE SINGAPORE INVESTS IN CISCO IP TELEPHONY SOLUTION FOR ITS COST-EFFECTIVENESS, RANGE OF FEATURES AND FLEXIBILITY.

Founded in Singapore in 1999, BLUE is a leading independent marketing consultancy that specializes in helping its clients directly improve the effectiveness and profitability of their interactions with customers. The Consultancy, which is known as "the measurable marketing company", is dedicated to helping FORTUNE 100 companies improve the effectiveness and profitability of their interactions with customers.

BLUE's business has grown from strength to strength in recent years and today boasts a team of 60 professionals in Singapore, and offices in Beijing, London, New York and Palo Alto. In early 2004, BLUE moved to a new office space at Clifford Pier in the heart of the business district. It took the opportunity to build an IP telephony infrastructure that will support its business today and well into the future.

THE CHALLENGE

BLUE WANTED TO INVEST IN A NEW TELEPHONY SOLUTION THAT COULD GROW WITH ITS BUSINESS. ITS KEY CONSIDERATIONS WERE COST, FLEXIBILITY, RELIABILITY AND SECURITY.

BLUE's success is based on three key principles – strategy, accountability and creativity – and its mission is to provide strategic interactive marketing solutions that result in the highest level of return on investment for its clients.

"Our ultimate goal is to help clients earn the trust of their customers and business partners through meaningful dialogues and relationships. This is the true essence of interactive marketing," said Kenny Powar, Managing Director, BLUE. "We believe that a clear, thoughtful strategy must precede and underpin all marketing activities to meet clearly defined objectives.

"We put ourselves on the line for our clients, and measure our success by theirs. Our clients feel secure in the knowledge that they are serviced by the industry's most experienced and highly skilled professionals."

This philosophy has resulted in significant year on year growth for BLUE both locally and globally. To accommodate its growing team, BLUE

decided to move to a bigger office in the Singapore Central Business District in February 2004. As part of this move a decision to upgrade the existing phone system was made.

"We have been using Centrex, for the past few years. When it came time to move, we started thinking about whether it would make sense for us to try something new, like IP telephony," explained Mr Powar.

"As a growing enterprise, cost was our number one consideration. We didn't want anything that would cost significantly more than our existing system. However, we did want more flexibility than the existing system was giving us. We needed to support an increasingly mobile workforce and we wanted a solution that can be portable if we needed to move to bigger offices yet again."



THIS IS THE POWER OF THE NETWORK. NOW.



THE SOLUTION

BLUE CONVINCED BY THE STRONG BUSINESS CASE CISCO SYSTEMS AND RADIANCE COMMUNICATIONS PUT TOGETHER FOR IP TELEPHONY, AND THEIR COMMITMENT TO MEETING BLUE'S SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS.

After some independent research and discussions with several resellers, BLUE decided to work with Radiance Communications, a Cisco Certified Premier Partner and its first IP Communications Specialization partner in Singapore, to design a Cisco IP Telephony Solution for its business.

"Our main concern about IP telephony was whether or not it would be as reliable and secure as more traditional systems. But after we conducted a thorough review of the different telephony solutions available, we were convinced that the Cisco IP Telephony solution could deliver the features, scalability and flexibility we needed, at the right price points," said Mr Powar.

The BLUE IP telephony solution comprises Cisco CallManager 3.3, Cisco MCS7815 CM Cluster, Cisco MCS7815 Unity with 60 voice mail licences, Cisco 2651 Voice Router with E1-PRI Trunk, Cisco Catalyst 3550 Series Inline Power Switches, six units of Cisco IP Phone 7940 and 54 units of Cisco IP Phone 7912. The solution comes complete with a one-year warranty and implementation services from Radiance Communications.

Working together, Cisco Systems and Radiance demonstrated to BLUE the benefits of a Cisco IP Telephony Solution. More importantly, the business case they built for investing in a Cisco IP Telephony Solution addressed BLUE's primary concern with cost.

Added Mr Powar, "Cisco and Radiance presented a detailed cost comparison of the Cisco IP Telephony versus migrating our existing Centrex system to our new office. Although the setup cost is higher for the IP telephony solution, they were able to show us that the solution would break even in three years because of its lower running costs. In fact, over a five-year period, the IP telephony solution would be much less expensive to maintain."

Both Cisco and Radiance went a step further. For one, Cisco proactively

engaged local service providers to help BLUE negotiate better rates for putting up lines into the new office building. Secondly, Radiance brought in Hitachi Credit Services to provide the financing options that BLUE needed to make the final decision.

"We were very impressed with the level of service we received from Cisco and Radiance. Ours is a relatively modest IP telephony implementation but they really pulled out all the stops to meet our very specific requirements," said Mr Powar. "By the time we signed on the dotted line, Radiance had three weeks to implement the entire solution, and they did it! The engineers basically worked round-the-clock for us and we truly appreciate that."

Established in 1999 through a joint venture of Singapore's two dominant telecommunications players – Keppel Telecommunications & Transportation and Singapore Telecommunications – Radiance Communications is one of Singapore's largest communications solutions provider with a customer base of more than 1,500 corporate customers across Singapore and Malaysia. It offers a wide range of offerings, from traditional PBXs to IP Telephony solutions and customised applications such as CRM, Multi-media Contact Centre, IVR, Unified & Voice Messaging, Networking, Mobility and Wireless.

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Mr Ng Kheng Gee, Chief Executive Officer, Radiance Communications said, "Today, both large enterprises and small-and-medium businesses (SMBs) can benefit from IP telephony. With a strong track record of successful implementations and a pool of technical resources and expertise, Radiance offers customers a one-stop shop for the best communications solutions in the market."



THE RESULTS

WITH THE CISCO IP TELEPHONY SOLUTION IN PLACE, BLUE ENJOYS ADVANCED FEATURES, IMPROVED SCALABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY, AND A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN THE LONG-TERM TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP.

The most immediate and obvious benefit of the new system to BLUE was its cost-effectiveness. Although the initial investment for Cisco IP Telephony Solution would be higher than simply migrating from their existing Centrex system, the Cisco IP Telephony Solution was chosen because it would enable BLUE to enjoy significant savings in the long run.

"When we invest in something as critical as our phone system, we have to look at the total cost of ownership, of which the bulk is in the running costs," said Mr Powar. "Based on set-up costs alone, we could not have justified investing in IP telephony. But when you look at it from a five-year total cost perspective, the Cisco IP Telephony Solution would actually cost us only half of what our previous system would have over the same period."

"THE CISCO IP TELEPHONY SOLUTION HAS PROVED TO BE AS STABLE AND RELIABLE AS A TRADITIONAL PABX SYSTEM. IT JUST WORKS ALL THE TIME, AND IT'S AS GOOD AS HAVING A TRADITIONAL PHONE SYSTEM, WITH ADDED BENEFITS."

Another area which is delivering significant cost reductions is IDD calls. With its own Virtual Private Network (VPN), BLUE now utilizes its existing data lines to transmit voice and data to its branch offices, overseas partners and customers. All consultants and management have access to VPN. "With so many people on the road, this helps keep our IDD bill under control. At the same time, it allows them to access resources on our servers and backup their data securely. Our staff love it too as it

enables them to complete administrative tasks – like filling in time-sheets – after office hours from home."

IP Telephony also delivers savings in administration as there is no need for separate administrators for voice and data. In addition, staff can do self-service deployment of IP endpoints, including pre-programmed, plug-and-play IP Phones.

Furthermore, BLUE's management team and consultants are enjoying the comprehensive range of features the Cisco IP Phones offer. Important messages can be sent just once to specified distribution lists – for example, company-wide or project teams – by voicemail or text messages which will be read out to the recipient.

"When our management have something urgent or important to announce, it isn't always easy to get everyone together in the same room since we travel a lot both within and outside Singapore. The Cisco IP Phones enables us to basically leave the same message for every one of our staff on their voicemail, which they can check from wherever they may be. Similarly with project teams, we can set up the project team distribution list right at the start, making it easier to schedule meetings with clients and keep everyone updated.

"The conference call feature on the Cisco IP Phones saves us both time and money. We used to have to pay for conference calls separately before, now anybody can initiate a conference call without incurring additional charges."

The Cisco IP Telephony Solution has proved to be as stable and reliable as a traditional PABX system. "The voice quality is as good as a traditional phone system," he added.

For BLUE's most frequent travellers, Cisco IP Softphones have been installed on their laptops so that they can take their phone extension with them and receive calls wherever they are connected to the corporate network. Even dial-up connections can now be used to check voicemail and place calls while on the road.



THE PARTNERSHIP

BLUE IMPRESSED WITH LEVEL OF SERVICE AND COMMITMENT FROM BOTH CISCO AND RADIANCE COMMUNICATIONS.

BLUE has been very happy with the level of support it has received from both Cisco and Radiance.

"We thought that as an SMB, we wouldn't enjoy the level of service large enterprises enjoy as a result of their bigger spend. But we were pleasantly surprised. From the first contact with Radiance to the post-implementation review, they have been superb," said Mr Powar.

"We had a dedicated account manager from Radiance and Cisco was there all the way through providing support too. The on-site team worked round-the-clock to ensure that they could meet our very tight time-line, they set up proper project plans, gave us daily updates and were overall very professional in getting everything ready for our first day in our new office. We honestly didn't expect everything to work from day one, but it did and has been seamless since."

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