

MOVIE MAGIC!

GOLDEN VILLAGE SPEEDS UP SERVICE WITH CISCO IP VPN

GOLDEN VILLAGE IS SINGAPORE'S LARGEST MULTIPLEX CINEMA OPERATOR WITH A STRONG REPUTATION FOR OFFERING MOVIEGOERS MORE CHOICE, COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE AT ITS CINEMAS.

A joint venture between Australia's Village Roadshow Limited and Golden Harvest Group of Hong Kong, Golden Village was established to develop and operate modern, luxurious multiplex cinemas throughout Asia. Its first foray into Asia was made in Singapore in 1992 with the opening of the Yishun 10 multiplex cinema. Today, it is the country's largest cinema chain with eight multiplex cinemas boasting 58

screens island-wide, including the state-of-the-art IMAX 3D theatre.

Its trademark features include an advanced computerized ticketing system with an integrated telephone booking facility, the genuine Big Screen effect in every cinema, enhanced by the best digital sound systems and fully-carpeted auditoria with ergonomically-designed seats with plenty of leg room for space.

THE CHALLENGE

GOLDEN VILLAGE CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVES END-TO-END CINEMA EXPERIENCE THROUGH NEW INFRASTRUCTURE CAPABILITIES.

Every year, over six million moviegoers walk through the doors of GV's eight multiplex cinemas.

"Our ongoing mission is to provide customers with the best cinematic experience possible, using a combination of advanced technology solutions and excellent customer service," said Roger Lim, IT Applications Manager, Golden Village. "Our multiplex cinemas are designed to make the entire experience a happy one – from the unmatched variety of movies to multiple booking channels to choose from."

To stay on top of the glamorous but highly demanding movie game, Golden Village continues to look into how technology can be used to improve the customer's entire movie-going experience.

"We are on a constant watch for ways we can improve. For example, we are continuously upgrading our cinemas to make the audio and visual sensory experience a more realistic and comfortable one, as well as finding ways to make the booking experience more convenient overall.

"One thing we are very focused on is making sure our infrastructure can support the requirements of our customers any time, anywhere. We currently have a distributed computing environment – comprising servers at our headquarters, a data centre at Telepark and each of our eight locations. As we move forward, we will be looking at how we can consolidate this so that upgrades, business continuity and new applications can be managed better."

Today, many GV customers are familiar with the booking channels it offers – phone booking, Internet booking, as well as the recently launched booking service from 175 AXS stations across Singapore. In March this year, GV also enhanced its Web site (www.gv.com.sg) and the backend engine to speed up the Internet booking process.

A key component of the upgrade was GV's decision to invest in Singapore Telecommunications' (Singtel) Meg@POP Internet Protocol Virtual Private Network (IP VPN) services which is built on a core foundation of Cisco routing technology.



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THE SOLUTION

CISCO-BASED IP VPN SERVICE DELIVERS VASTLY IMPROVED BANDWIDTH COST-EFFECTIVELY.

“The number of customers today who choose to book over the Internet is growing rapidly and we need to make sure that our infrastructure can support this new trend. For these online customers, speed is of the essence so it was imperative that we find a way to reduce the time taken to make an Internet booking,” said Roger.

Suntronics, a Cisco Systems Partner, recommended the Singtel Meg@POP service to GV as a means of getting vastly improved bandwidth in a cost-effective manner.

The IP VPN services are operated over SingTel’s Gigabit IP backbone and based on Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) technology. From the suite of offerings, GV selected the EthernetLink and the ADSL-based BizLink services.

EthernetLink provides GV with a 2 MB link between the headquarters and the data centre, which aids in the scheduled daily replication of all transactional data between the two locations. In addition, BizLink improves the bandwidth between the headquarters and its cinemas four-fold – from 128 KB on their existing leased line to 512 KB.

GV runs on an all-Cisco network and was very comfortable implementing the Singtel Meg@POP service as it was also based on Cisco technology. All GV had to do to benefit from the service was purchase two Cisco Router 2621 for their data centre (one for redundancy purposes) and Cisco Routers 1721 for each of their other locations.

The implementation was handled by Suntronics and took less than a month to complete. To ensure that normal operations were not disrupted, GV and Suntronics got the new network up and running before switching over.

Roger explained the rationale. “Our main priority was that there be no disruption to our business. We started the implementation really early – at about 8 in the morning – continued to monitor it throughout the day. Having both networks up and running at the same time was a good idea as it meant that if there were any problems, we could switch back quickly.”

Business continuity was top of mind during the design and implementation. He added.

“We designed the network without any single points of failure. For example, we purchased two Cisco Routers 2621 for our data centre as a business continuity measure. As an additional precaution, in the event of any problems with the IP VPN service, our existing ISDN will kick in.”



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THE RESULTS

GOLDEN VILLAGE'S BOOKING SERVICE SPEEDS UP BY 40 PERCENT AFTER IMPLEMENTATION.

Golden Village has an ongoing policy of investing in the latest technology for on screen and behind the scenes to improve the end-to-end movie-going experience for its customers. The new IP VPN service has been a hit from day one, delivering reduced costs, improved performance and better customer service.

Roger elaborated. "The entire booking transaction process – whether it is by phone, Internet or AXS station – has been 40 percent faster since we went live in early April. Because it is faster, we believe that more customers will use these booking channels, especially the Internet. In fact, two in five tickets of the advanced sales for "The Matrix Reloaded" which premiered in May this year were made over the Internet."

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GV is also seeing significant cost savings from the implementation. "Today, we get four times the bandwidth at one third the cost. With

these numbers, we expect to recoup our investment within a year, which is a pretty good return on investment for us."

Ling Ting Ming, Sales and Marketing Manager, Suntronics added. "The advantage of the new service is that it is fully IP-enabled and digital compared to point-to-point leased lines. Built on Cisco MPLS technology, it offers better scalability, redundancy and greater bandwidth at a lower unit cost. This means GV gets better performance and saves money at the same time."

In the near future, GV plans to introduce more technology-based services to improve its overall value proposition to customers.

"One thing we will be doing now is introducing a new content providing software which will centralize the programming of the trailers, advertisements and show-times screened at our cinemas. This will be run from our data centre and distributed over the IP VPN network. We will also be changing all the monitors to Plasma screens."



THE PARTNERSHIP

WITH CISCO TECHNOLOGY POWERING BOTH THE GOLDEN VILLAGE'S INFRASTRUCTURE AND SINGTEL MEG@POP SERVICE, THE BENEFITS OF IP VPN ARE DELIVERED HASSLE-FREE.

What makes all this possible is the extremely reliable routers from Cisco, both at GV and at the backend of the Singtel Meg@POP service.

"Cisco is very well known for router technology. It offers greater customization than competitive products, which gives the network engineers more flexibility to configure the network as required. It's the software from Cisco that makes the difference. There is no other router available today that could have delivered this level of flexibility," said Roger.

"We were also very comfortable with the fact that the Singtel Meg@POP service used Cisco technology as Cisco is our preferred vendor for routers. It makes it easier for us to manage, monitor and control the entire network."

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**ROGER LIM, IT APPLICATIONS MANAGER,
GOLDEN VILLAGE**



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