



## CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

# AMERICAN WEST WORLDWIDE EXPRESS GAINS VISIBILITY WITH CISCO IP COMMUNICATIONS SOLUTION

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### CUSTOMER NAME

American West Worldwide Express

#### INDUSTRY

Transportation

#### BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Enhance productivity and increase customer service while reducing costs
- Use technology to improve business processes while maintaining personal relationships with customers
- Create a reliable, available, and scalable voice and data network

#### NETWORK SOLUTION

- Cisco end-to-end voice and data solution delivered by service provider Covad, a Cisco Powered Network Program member

#### BUSINESS VALUE

- Reduced monthly telecommunication costs by 30 percent
- Helped enable effective communication and collaboration between employees and customers
- Gained customer accessibility and increased profitability by focusing on the core business

**By replacing disparate telephony and data systems with a secure, unified, IP-based communication infrastructure over a network built with Cisco equipment, American West Worldwide Express is experiencing increased employee productivity, reduced telecommunication costs, and substantial gains in customer satisfaction.**

#### BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Headquartered in San Luis Obispo, California, American West Worldwide Express is a transportation company with more than 200 employees and regional offices in California, Texas, Illinois, and Ohio. American West specializes in transporting manufactured goods to retail stores, with divisions focusing on air freight, smaller or less-than-truckload shipments, special commodities, and logistics.

The transportation of goods is vital to all businesses, and the most successful transportation providers are those that are able to effectively manage the details and logistics necessary to move merchandise through the supply chain, while also providing real-time information to their customers. This can be achieved by using the right technology and providing superior customer service.

“Our customers expect us to transport their goods from point A to point B in like condition, in a timely manner—and give them status on their shipment throughout the process,” says Curt Scott, vice president of Information Technology at American West Worldwide Express.

“Every day, American West employees are contacting customers, scheduling deliveries, and communicating with fellow employees in remote locations. Our success depends on access to a reliable telephone and data system.” American West’s goal is to build long-term relationships and gain higher access to its retail customers. To meet this challenge, they needed a telephony and data system that would support these new and growing demands.

American West had several different phone systems, cellular plans, paging systems, and long-distance carriers in its various locations—and none were connected. When a customer contacted the incorrect service center, American West had no way to systematically forward the call. Instead, the customer was asked to call back. Each salesperson was assigned several contact numbers, meaning that customers and vendors often had to manage a lengthy list of numbers.

Meanwhile, American West’s monthly telephone and maintenance fees were increasing, while productivity was decreasing. “With different, noncompatible data and telephony systems in each location, our IT department spent most of its time servicing each telephone and network system—rather than concentrating on our core business,” says Scott.

To increase visibility and availability with its customers, American West recognized the need for a unified, reliable, secure, scalable, and more cost-effective communications system. “Our telephone and network system has to be reliable, so that our customers will trust us with their livelihood, as well as scalable, to grow the way we grow,” says Scott.

Cisco Systems, Inc.

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## NETWORK SOLUTION

American West enlisted Covad to help it find a solution. Covad uses Cisco Systems® equipment to provide converged voice and data services to small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) nationwide. Covad, whose network and call-pattern analysis was developed by its certified dealer, PJP Datacomm, Inc., recommended that American West move to a hosted IP Communications platform to help it unify communications, improve employee collaboration throughout the organization, and reduce monthly costs.

Initially, Scott had concerns about the quality and reliability of IP Communications, and the perception of IP Communications as a large-enterprise solution. After listening to an IP phone demonstration, talking to references, understanding the cost-savings analysis, and realizing that Cisco® equipment would control the voice quality, Scott chose Covad's hosted voice service.

PJP Datacomm, a Covad-certified partner, designed and installed the new American West IP Communications solution using Cisco network routers, switches, and IP phones. PJP Datacomm also devised a converged infrastructure that could easily connect to Covad's voice over IP (VoIP) services. American West now enjoys a reliable converged voice and data solution, at a more affordable price.

"The Cisco and Covad solution was ideal for American West because of affordability and ease of implementation," says Erroll Marchais, vice president of PJP Datacomm, Inc. Covad takes advantage of Cisco products in its infrastructure, including 80 Cisco IP Phone 7960s and IP Phone 7940s, 15 fax machines, 40 virtual fax numbers, and a set of IP Communications solutions, including Cisco Unity® Voice Messaging, Cisco MeetingPlace® for rich-media voice and Web conferencing, and Cisco CallManager for call processing. For security purposes, PJP Datacomm designed and installed one physical network with two logical networks across the American West system. Cisco Catalyst® inline power switches manage and optimize network bandwidth. Also, because Covad controls private branch exchange (PBX) functionality, American West's PBX was replaced with a Cisco router. "By installing a Covad T1 Circuit with a Cisco 1721 Router at each location, American West automatically had a wide area network (WAN) and a voice network that were transparently linked together," says Marchais.

## MANAGED VOICE SERVICES

As a service provider member of the Cisco Powered Network Program, Covad delivers its services over a network built end-to-end with Cisco equipment, delivering the performance and reliability that American West requires over an IP network. By providing Cisco IP Communications over a managed private infrastructure, Covad can guarantee voice quality from the core to the network edge. "Cisco routers, switches, and phones allow Covad to prioritize voice traffic over other applications on the network, so we don't experience drops, delays, or garbles," Scott says. "This is very important in building trust, credibility, and visibility with our customers."

By outsourcing voice and data to Covad, American West receives enterprise-style operational efficiency, end-to-end security, and cutting-edge technology—without having to make a significant initial investment. Covad and PJP DataComm manage day-to-day network operations, proactively monitoring the network, so that American West can focus on running its business. "Our total cost of ownership (TCO) has decreased, while the reliability [of our services] has increased," says Scott. "We no longer worry about investing in software upgrades and maintenance contracts, or how to get the latest feature or capability. The intelligence is in the network. Covad gives us the highest level of reliability and redundancy, along with the latest features." Because Covad uses a private network and firewalls, American West receives the added benefit of enterprise-style security for its IP telephony calls; Covad's standard network security protects voice as well as data.

## BUSINESS VALUE

With the new network infrastructure in place for over a year, American West's return on investment (ROI) is even better than it had hoped for. "The cost savings for American West has been phenomenal," says Scott. "By unifying all of our remote locations with one system, we reduced our monthly telecommunication costs by more than 30 percent. This cost savings funded our new Cisco routers, switches, and IP phones throughout the organization."

With Covad's managed services network and hosted Cisco IP Communications solution, American West's total cost of ownership (TCO) for telephony and data is greatly reduced, and the administrative time American West personnel spends in managing and maintaining the solution is minimized. "Anyone with a business phone knows there are many options and additional ways to make changes within the system," says Scott. "Now, Covad makes our changes remotely. As a systems administrator, this is a very powerful tool."

Most importantly, the new communication infrastructure brings all of American West together so it can better serve its customers. "Using technology to be more personable can be considered an oxymoron, but American West is doing it," says Scott. "With the new voice and data system, our service representatives identify the caller's name on the phone prior to answering. This feature enables us to respond more personably and effectively by addressing their needs immediately." In addition, the new, single-number reach functionality simplifies the process for American West customers. Each employee has one phone number where he or she can be reached, and that number can be rerouted if that person changes locations.

For American West, network reliability has been invaluable. Before implementing the Covad and Cisco converged voice solution, American West used valuable time trying to solve its connectivity issues between offices. Now, the interoperable voice and data system allows employees to focus on their customers and concentrate on moving product through the supply chain in a timely manner. "We are keenly aware that if we are not available, our customers will pick up the phone and call another transportation company to move their freight," says Scott. "It gives us great peace of mind to know that information is accessible, data moves back and forth securely, and our customers can rely on us."

The Cisco and Covad solution gives SMBs enterprise-style communication services at prices they can afford. "By understanding Covad's capability, PJP Datacomm did an excellent job of designing and installing a system, and training our IT staff on administration and our employees on the phones," says Scott. "The benefits of the new network infrastructure are tremendous and we look forward to working together [with Covad] to making changes as our business grows," he says.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

To learn more about Cisco Managed Services for SMBs, visit: <http://www.cisco.com/go/ms4smb>.

To learn more about Cisco SMB Class Solutions, visit:

[http://www.cisco.com/en/US/netsol/ns339/networking\\_solutions\\_small\\_medium\\_sized\\_business\\_home.html](http://www.cisco.com/en/US/netsol/ns339/networking_solutions_small_medium_sized_business_home.html).

For more information about Cisco IP Communications solutions, please contact your Cisco account manager.

This customer story is based on information provided by Covad Communications and American West Worldwide Express, and describes how that particular organization benefits from the deployment of Cisco products. Many factors may have contributed to the results and benefits described; Cisco does not guarantee comparable results elsewhere.

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Cn/LW7921 02/05

