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'At a Glance' Box:	A new company with a strong vision, a unique and challenging office environment and no technology infrastructure relies on Cisco SMB Select Partner Epifany to design and deploy a network and communications system. The goal is to unify disparate office space and mobile employees, while providing the infrastructure for the transfer of large video files and scalability for its evolving business. Read how the solid Cisco network foundation designed and deployed by Epifany has helped enable this new media company to grow and prosper.	
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Industry

Entertainment, Education

Business Challenge

A new company with a dynamic, fluid work culture has offices spread among three buildings in a mixed commercial, retail and residential development. The company wants a converged solution for voice, data, and video; mobility for its employees; and the ability to move and store massive video files. The property had no fiber optic-infrastructure to connect the buildings, despite multiple attempts to build one.

Network Solution

Epifany, a Cisco® Premier Certified and Cisco SMB Select Partner, designed and implemented a converged network featuring Cisco Unified Communications Express. They also deployed a fiber-optic backbone that runs high-speed gigabit links between all sites and has scalability for future capacity. IP telephony-based centralized call processing with Cisco Unified CallManager Express enables the different office locations to share one phone system.

Business Value

The unified infrastructure delivers operational efficiencies, scalability, and reduced cost when compared to separate, standalone networks and phone systems. The network's flexibility and scalability absorbed new technical demands as the company fine-tuned its business.

Splash Media Achieves Technology Vision with Cisco Unified Communications from SMB Select Partner Epifany

Splash Media builds niche broadband television channels with specific program content on such subjects as stock trading and personal success, which it streams out over its network. In keeping with the company's mission to redefine television, its IT department wanted to redefine a corporate network.

At the company's inception, its 25 founding employees were to work in a unique office Addison, Texas office environment made up of four physically separate locations in three buildings. Two office spaces would be located on the second and fifth floors of a building that also contained a mixture of apartments and retail space. These two locations needed to seamlessly connect with the corporate headquarters and with the Splash Media production studio.

Splash Media's studio staff doesn't have physical office space at all — the producers, writers, and talent work in conference rooms or on park benches. And even those employees with desks wanted to be fluid and mobile so that ad hoc creative meetings can occur anytime, anyplace.

“We were a brand new company with a strong vision and no technology infrastructure,” says Rodney Murray, VP of Technology & Engineering for Splash Media. “A converged voice, data, and media network appealed to me with our offices and studio in different locations, and our unique, mobile employee culture.”

He chose Dallas, Texas-based Epifany, a Cisco Premier Certified Partner and Cisco SMB Select Partner, to implement a solid infrastructure to support seamless workflow. Michael Pollak, an Epifany principal, says Epifany’s value is in fully understanding the customer’s requirements and designing a technology solution that fits the business goals, timeline, and budget. “We are not a fulfillment shop; we provide a service by developing solutions and solving problems,” he says. “We become an extension of each client’s staff and enable them to leverage our skill sets.”

Murray had very particular ideas about what technology needed to deliver, and looked to Epifany engineering expertise for design and implementation. He’d been a Cisco customer for many years and needed a partner with a solid relationship with Cisco.

“Rodney Murray knew what he wanted and understood the challenges presented by the physical environment,” says Pollak. Our challenge was to design a secure, converged network with IP communications that would connect voice, video, data, and wireless together seamlessly. Multiple networks and phone systems would have been cost prohibitive and difficult for Splash Media to manage.” Additionally, Splash Media needed to transfer large video files of 100 GB or more, which the existing copper infrastructure could not support.

Despite the challenging physical environment, Epifany managed to deploy over five miles of fiber, creating a scalable network that could run high-speed gigabit links between all the sites. The scalability proved critical, as the 25 founding Splash Media employees quickly swelled to nearly 100 before the deployment was complete. Epifany designed a fully redundant multi-gigabit switching infrastructure and Cisco Unified Communication system. IP telephony-based centralized call processing with Cisco Unified CallManager Express would enable the different locations to share one phone system. The unified infrastructure would deliver operational efficiencies, scalability, and reduced cost when compared to separate, standalone networks and phone systems.

Murray’s finds that Splash Media employees like the dynamic display capabilities of their 7960G phones, especially the caller ID display. They also like programming the speed dials as well as the ability to take their phone with them to wherever they want or need to work. “It’s not unusual for people to work for a few days in another part of the complex, and the phones enable them to stay mobile and productive,” says Murray.

The network and communications solution implemented by Epifany enables the dynamic, seamless workflow that is a big part of the Splash Media company culture.

“The Cisco Unified Wireless IP Phone 7920 handsets allow employees to take wherever they are, and employees can walk their laptops to any of our facilities and never lose connectivity,” says Murray. “And we can move massive video files via a simple drag and drop. This is not a standard IT data system — thanks to Epifany, we’re pushing the envelope on moving and storing video and massive media files.”

As an entrepreneurial company Splash Media continues to fine-tune its business model, and its Cisco converged network and Cisco Unified Communication system can adjust to new demands. For instance, when its customers wanted content streamed out over the Internet, Splash Media’s corporate infrastructure scaled to a hosting facility, and plans are underway to deploy an IPTV solution using the same Cisco infrastructure.

“As a decision maker and buyer of technology, I took some heat internally over this initial network investment,” says Murray. “At that time it was maybe more than some executives wanted. But looking back, our business would not have succeeded like it has without that solid network foundation.” The reliability and scalability of Splash Media’s Cisco enables it to continue evolving, such as adding daily podcasts and other streaming content.

Helping small and medium-sized businesses is what Epifany is all about. While its competitors can handle some of the pieces of a complex deployment like the one for Splash Media, Epifany focuses on providing a comprehensive suite of IT consulting and “insourcing” services.

“In the SMB space, IT resources are taxed,” says Pollak. “They need a trusted partner enabling them to accelerate deployment of critical projects, leverage a single source for turn-key solutions, and maximize return on IT assets.”

Murray concurs. “We’re a small company in Addison, Texas,” he says. “But our Cisco network enables us to reach out globally and gives us a bigger footprint in the marketplace.”

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