NSW Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages
improves service and saves money
with **IP Telephony**

CISCO SYSTEMS

Background

The New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages is a division of the Attorney General's Department. The function of this Government Trading Enterprise is to record all births, deaths, marriages and changes of name in New South Wales and provide documentation to individuals to help establish a range of legal entitlements. The Registry also collects statistical data for governments and other organisations and performs civil marriages.

The Registry holds over 16 million births, deaths and marriage records dating from 1788 to the present day. On average 174,000 new births, deaths, marriages, adoptions and changes of name are registered each year and the office receives approximately 394,000 applications for certificates.

The Registry has its corporate office in Chippendale, with regional offices in Newcastle and Wollongong. The customer contact centre is essential to efficiently assist the public with enquiries.

Challenge

In 2001, when planning their relocation to wholly owned premises in Chippendale, staff at the Registry realised this was an ideal opportunity to review and update their IT infrastructure in keeping with their vision to be 'a world leader in the innovative management and provision of personal information'.

Jeannette McAnderson, Manager, Client Services explains: "We went to market for the provision of new IT infrastructure. Essentially, we were looking for a cost-effective solution that would empower our staff to carry out their work efficiently and effectively. In particular, we were focused on improving the effectiveness of our customer call centre, which performs a core function at the Registry."

Allcom Networks was the successfully appointed integrator. Andrew Leigh, Managing Director, comments: "We did not look at the individual systems in isolation, instead we reviewed the entire IT&T infrastructure including the telephony. Their existing PABX-based phone system was not offering the functionality they wanted in their call centre. Staff at the Registry wanted to know exactly how efficient they were in their dealings with the public and without reports or statistical analysis for their phone system and contact centre, they could only assess their customer service levels by asking their call centre operators to carry out manual reviews."

They were also concerned to minimise the use of voice prompts in the IVR, which they knew were unpopular, but they couldn't do that without knowing what information the public requested most frequently.

Allcom Networks performed a cost benefit analysis of three options: purchasing a new PABX/Hybrid PABX-IP Solution; relocating the Spectrum System to the new offices; or investing in a fully converged network utilising IP Telephony.

It quickly became apparent that a converged voice and data network, using Cisco's Architecture for Voice, Video and Integrated Data (AVVID) would not only offer cost-savings to the Registry but also improved functionality and a wide range of options that the Registry could leverage in the future.

Staff at the Registry were invited by Allcom Networks to inspect a fully functional converged network site at Rail Services Australia (RSA). As soon as they saw first-hand the benefits and efficiencies of IP Telephony, they were convinced it was the best way forward.

Solution

In December 2001, Allcom Networks rolled out the new infrastructure in readiness for the staff relocation into their new premises. Old network hubs were replaced with Cisco Catalyst 3524 power feeding switches on a redundant gigabit Ethernet backbone, linking each floor of the 6-storey building.

Approximately 120 PCs and 15 servers operate on the network as well as 30 Cisco 7960, and 90 Cisco 7910 IP Telephony handsets. The registry also has a licence for 50 Cisco Softphones. These operate as an application on the Windows 2000 PC with call establishment being activated via the system keyboard or on screen using the mouse. Voice communication is achieved via a USB head-set attached to the PC. The Cisco Call Manager software which performs the IP telephony control runs under Windows 2000® on a clustered Media Convergence Server.

Allcom Networks also provided staff training for the new features of the Cisco IP Telephony handsets and the voice mail system. Leigh comments: "We have trained the BDM IT team to carry out adds, moves and changes which means that they can easily manage the telephony system themselves, saving on external support costs. The rest of the staff required no more than the most basic instructions as each phone comes with an instruction booklet and the Cisco handsets are very straightforward to use. There were a number of hearing-impaired staff at the Registry who were able to use the phones by simply adjusting the volume, with no external amplification device being required."

The staff enjoy the use of the large phone display, which can display xml pages and also provides call information ,

such as call duration, caller ID and call waiting. The IP phones also offer all the usual options, such as speed dialling and conference calls.

Cisco Unity is used for voice mail. It's a powerful communications server that provides advanced, convergence-based services, such as voicemail and unified messaging, and integrates these services with common desktop applications.

Once the phones were installed, the benefits were immediately appreciated. McAnderson comments: "Staff have been very positive about the new IP Telephony handsets; they have directories and functions that are useful particularly in the call centre. Now every staff member has voice mail with standard features across the network. Previously only select people had access to this feature and as a result many calls were missed. People can carry out their workload more professionally now and that has improved their productivity."

Results

For the Registry, a Government organisation performing a public service, the most important benefits of the converged network have been in the operation of the Call Centre.

McAnderson comments: "With the new system gleaning data electronically, we could discover how long people were waiting, how many calls were abandoned and how many were answered. We determined that our customers would benefit from us utilising the IVR system for their most frequent enquiries, which were:

1. Requests for location, website and contact details;

2. Enquiries regarding how to obtain application for certificates;

3. Requests to speak to a customer representative.

"We implemented the voice-prompting system with on-hold messaging which provides information on which forms of standard ID are accepted, as well as promoting our commemorative products and our wills register.

"With this in place, we immediately saw a significant reduction in the number of abandoned calls, improved Transaction Completion Rates (TCRs) and our staff are freed up to spend more time with people who need their help."

Leigh added that the feature enhancements of ICDv3, due in July 2002, will give BDM access to a broader range of performance and management information on both a real-time and historical basis.

"Our next plan is to integrate staff from Newcastle and Wollongong into the call centre, as with this system they no longer need to be located in Sydney. This means that from the 1300 number, we can automatically direct calls to the most appropriate customer representative."

"Another advantage has been in cost management. We saved 20% on cabling costs to the new building because a converged network requires less infrastructure. All calls within the system are free, which is already providing ongoing savings."

"In addition, we continue to save on relocation costs. Our staff are multi-skilled which means they frequently move from position to position and therefore from desk to desk within the organisation. Previously, this involved a relocation cost of approximately $150 for the PABX to be reprogrammed – a figure that did not even factor in the loss of productivity while we waited for this to occur. With IP telephony handsets, staff simply pick up their handsets and plug them in at the new desk. And it doesn't cost a cent."

The Registry now plans to leverage the converged network even further. Rather than relying on a fax machine to receive documentation, they are implementing software that will enable staff to receive faxes on their desktops.

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> *Jeannette McAnderson, Manager,*
> *Client Services,*
> *The New South Wales Registry of Births,*
> *Deaths and Marriages*

Partnerships

One of the challenges when implementing an IP Telephony solution is balancing data and voice on a converged network. The New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages selected a Cisco Certified Partner – IP Telephony Specialised – to design and provide their successful solution.

"Allcom Networks listened to our requirements and tailored a solution to meet our needs and budget with an eye to long-term benefits," said McAnderson. "We were delighted by their proactive approach and the care they took in selecting appropriate technology that will provide us with maximum ROI, both in terms of cost and benefit."

Leigh adds, "With a converged network in place, the Registry now has a firm foundation for ongoing innovation. In a customer-oriented organisation with a contact centre, it is not just the cost benefits of IP Telephony that are so valuable, it is also the integration of voice and data that enable productivity benefits by having everything at their fingertips."

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