

Delivering Total Communications Solutions for Customers

Cincinnati Bell's hosted Emerge solution based on Cisco technology simplifies voice services for small business.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>CINCINNATI BELL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry: Telecommunications • Employees: 3000 • Location: Cincinnati, Ohio <p>TRENDY MINDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry: Professional Services • Employees: 14 • Location: Indianapolis, Indiana
<p>CHALLENGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable service providers to deliver feature-rich, easy-to-manage hosted voice and data communications solution for small and medium-sized business customers • Deliver complete, integrated, customer premise equipment (CPE) solution for small businesses that simplifies deployment and service delivery • Ease CPE provisioning and help ensure interoperability of end-customer telephony solution
<p>RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted solution enables Cincinnati Bell to deploy hosted telephony services to small businesses with confidence and ease • Single-vendor solution delivers peace of mind, simplifying troubleshooting for Cincinnati Bell and its end customers • Simplified provisioning with interoperable solution saves Cincinnati Bell time and money
<p>SOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisco Hosted Small Business (HSB) Communications solution consisting of Cisco routers, switches, and phones removes guesswork of assembling a multivendor solution • Fully tested solution is certified for smooth, reliable operation with leading call control vendors • Flexible solution allows Cincinnati Bell deliver its robust Emerge service, to small business customers

Challenge

As businesses and their customers become more sophisticated and mobile, their communication needs are changing. Nowadays, even small organizations expect the same rich phone and messaging features that large companies enjoy. To meet these needs, Cincinnati Bell, one of the nation's leading local exchange and wireless providers, introduced Emerge. This hosted voice and data communications service provides small and medium businesses with greater control of their day-to-day business communications.

To optimize its solution offering, Cincinnati Bell needed customer premises equipment (CPE) that was fast and easy to install, manage, and maintain. The routers, switches, and phones at customer sites would have to work smoothly together without requiring time-consuming, expensive testing. The CPE solution would also have to work smoothly with the call control services that Cincinnati Bell employed.

"Our previous solution was based on a mix of equipment from different vendors, which created a risk of interoperability and reliability issues," says Brad Loomis, product manager at Cincinnati Bell. "We had to change switches frequently, and the new equipment would have to be updated and reconfigured differently, slowing implementations."

The solution would also have to offer simplified provisioning, minimizing configuration tasks that could also slow deployments.

"Provisioning the phones at the customer's site was very cumbersome," says Loomis. "On our previous system, we had to manually type in network information on each handset, using the phone's keypad. It might take us 15 minutes to set up a single phone."

For flexibility, Cincinnati Bell also needed a solution that would be easy to scale and update to meet customers' changing business needs. Most importantly from a customer perspective, Cincinnati Bell needed to offer a single-vendor solution that would provide consistent, reliable performance, and simplified support, for complete peace of mind.

“The Cisco solution has simplified phone provisioning tremendously. We use our DNS server to set up the phones in minutes instead of hours. All we have to do is run a Web link to the phones, and the system reboots, updates the firmware, and configures itself.”

– Brad Loomis, Product Manager, Cincinnati Bell

Results

To support its Emerge hosted voice and data communications offering, Cincinnati Bell chose the Cisco® Hosted Small Business (HSB) Communications solution, a fully tested infrastructure consisting of Cisco routers, switches, and IP phones, working cohesively together with major third-party call control platforms to enable end-to-end service deployments. By choosing a proven, ready-made solution, Cincinnati Bell can remove the guesswork involved in cobbling together a CPE solution from multiple vendors.

“Having a single-vendor solution provides a tremendous advantage for us,” says Loomis. “We know that Cisco phones work with Cisco switches and Cisco Integrated Access Devices. There’s no longer any need for us to piece together a solution, because all our CPE equipment works smoothly together.”

Installation is easy, because the Cisco HSB Communications solution delivers tested, documented interoperability with major third-party call control platforms, to enable end-to-end service deployments. Configuring the solution remotely is simple.

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With its reliable, easy-to-manage customer premises solution in place, Cincinnati Bell can focus on delivering the service and features that customers demand. For example, TrendyMinds, a full-service advertising and PR agency, adopted the Emerge service to support its headquarters in Indianapolis. The company was working on an advertising project for Cincinnati Bell, and liked the Emerge solution so much that they decided to acquire it for their own business.

“We needed a solution that would make it easy for us to take calls and messages wherever we were working,” says Trevor Yager, Principal and CEO at TrendyMinds. “We don’t have a dedicated receptionist, and our employees are often out of the office at client meetings or running errands, so mobility support was key for us.”

Because the Emerge solution is a hosted service, TrendyMinds can enjoy complete peace of mind in knowing that their solution will deliver consistent, reliable communications.

“It’s great to have just one vendor who can handle all of our needs,” says Yager. “It has definitely simplified all of our business communications.”

The Cisco HSB Communications Solution lets Cincinnati Bell unlock real business benefits not only in the short term, but over the long term as well. The solution’s support for standards-based provisioning enables consistent, repeatable remote provisioning, to help reduce ongoing operating expenses and speed time to market. And renowned Cisco reliability and support lets Cincinnati Bell deploy its hosted services with complete confidence.

“We appreciate the Cisco name and Cisco quality, and our customers recognize it as well,” says Loomis.

Solution

The Cisco HSB Communications provides Cincinnati Bell with a proven infrastructure for customers, from a single source, all designed to work together smoothly and reliably. The flexible solution offers a choice of platforms, and based in its specific requirements, Cincinnati Bell chose Cisco Integrated Access Device (IAD) platforms to terminate their service at the small business customer premise. The Cisco IAD delivers a rich combination of data, toll-quality analog or digital voice, security, and wireless services, in a scalable solution that can grow and change as needed.

Cisco ESW Series Switches are the second component of the solution, extending network connectivity throughout customers' offices. These managed Ethernet switches deliver wire-speed Fast Ethernet or Gigabit Ethernet connectivity, integrated security, quality of service (QoS), and Power over Ethernet (PoE) to power IP phones.

Cisco SPA500 Series Unified IP Phones complete the Cisco HSB Communications Solution. Affordable, reliable, and easy to use, they let small business customers smoothly connect employees and offices, offer application support to enhance productivity, and encryption for security.

The versatile Cisco solution lets Cincinnati Bell make good on the promise of its Emerge service: to deliver next-generation technology, freedom, and mobility anywhere, and reliable business continuity to its business customers.

Because the Emerge solution is a complete, hosted service, with equipment backed by a single vendor, Cincinnati Bell customers enjoy total peace of mind in knowing that their solution will deliver consistent, reliable communications.

"Our hosted solution takes the headaches away from customers," says Loomis. "If the Cisco phone dies, we will replace it at no charge. And because the service resides in the cloud, even if power fails or the T1 goes down, voicemail and other applications will keep running until power is restored. Emerge will help ensure that customers never miss a call by easily re-routing calls to the employee's mobile phone."

PRODUCT LIST

- Cisco Integrated Access Devices
- Cisco ESW500 Series Switches
- Cisco SPA500 Series IP Phones

By offering customers a single point of contact for all their communications, Cincinnati Bell can improve accountability and customer satisfaction, and build on a growing base of loyal clients for years to come.

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco solution, visit <http://www.cisco.com/go/hsb> or contact your authorized Cisco salesperson.



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