

Canadian Title Insurance Company Stakes its Ground with Unified Communications

First Canadian Title implements Cisco Unified Communications to enhance customer service and boost productivity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>FIRST CANADIAN TITLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance • Oakville, Ontario, Canada • 1,000 employees <p>BUSINESS CHALLENGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain internal and external communications in a remote office while company expansion took place at home office • Introduce new voice services uniformly to all offices across the country • Growth and vision of the company was not supported by the traditional private branch exchange phone system • Continue to introduce innovative ways to increase customer service, in order to stay competitive in the market
<p>SOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added voice capabilities to the existing LAN/WAN network infrastructure
<p>BUSINESS RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompt return on investment in terms of cost avoidance, reduced toll charges, ease of maintenance and increased productivity • Improved customer service by providing more flexible solutions in the call center • Improved internal customer service

Business Challenge

First Canadian Title is a pioneer in the title insurance business. With a customer base of more than 15,000 lawyers and notaries across Canada, as well as banks, lending institutions, real estate agents and mortgage brokers, First Canadian Title is a trusted provider of title insurance and real estate related services for commercial and residential properties. Customers turn to them for their expertise and for the peace of mind that comes from working with an industry leader known for reducing risk and maintaining high standards in customer service.

Given the fast-paced and detailed nature of real estate transactions, First Canadian Title understands the important role that customer service plays in the business and strives to continuously find new ways to deliver it, including through technology innovation.

Headquartered in Oakville, Ontario, First Canadian Title employs more than 1,000

people at seven locations coast-to-coast. In 2005, the company outgrew its Oakville headquarters and realized that, to maintain and accommodate future growth, it needed to expand. In the meantime, however, cramped quarters necessitated the development of a temporary satellite office in Oakville that would house employees until the permanent expansion was built. When the company conducted a thorough assessment of requirements and technology for the satellite office, attention turned to the existing traditional private branch exchange (PBX) phone system. The PBX provided First Canadian Title with basic communications functionality, but was unable to economically accommodate the growth of services required by the company. The implementation and maintenance that the PBX system required for the satellite office would have resulted in unnecessary costs and was not practical to install in a temporary, leased office. The system would have also limited the level of customer service and responsiveness that First Canadian Title could provide during peak call times.

“We had requests from our business to implement networked voice services across all our offices in Canada as a means to better manage and improve customer service. There were also requests for inter-office four-digit dialing, integration of our voice system with our transactional applications, more flexible business continuity voice options and instant messaging,” says David Kereliuk, senior manager, technical services at First Canadian Title. “It would have required extensive work, investment and technology upgrades for our PBX to provide these kinds of features.”

As the existing offices were already outfitted with a Cisco® LAN/WAN network infrastructure, it was a logical next step to build upon that solid infrastructure and to add voice capabilities with [Cisco Unified Communications](#). “After making the decision to standardize on Cisco in 2005, we were confident in moving forward with Cisco for our voice system requirements,” says Kereliuk.

Network Solution

First Canadian Title turned to Cisco Canada in May 2006 and, with the help of integrator Deloitte Consulting, began its Cisco Unified Communications implementation.

“We wanted to align ourselves with an industry leader and Cisco was a natural fit. Cisco’s vision and commitment to customer service were aligned with ours from the very beginning,” says Kereliuk. “Cisco understood what we needed to continue to grow.”

Despite a very aggressive deadline of five weeks to open the temporary office, the [Cisco Unified Communications Solution](#) deployment—including [Cisco Unified CallManager® 4.1](#), [Cisco Unity Unified Messaging®](#) and [Cisco Unified Contact Center®](#)—was smooth and transparent. The company continued the rollout to include the first phase of its Oakville head office, including its IT Help Desk, as well as one of its Calgary locations.

“We now have a consolidated view of all incoming customer calls and the ability to route calls between offices and between employees with the necessary skill set needed to manage the calls. This enables us to provide even better customer service, which is what we are all about.”

—David Kereliuk, Senior Manager, First Canadian Title

[Cisco Unified CallManager](#), the call-processing component of the solution, provides First Canadian Title with four-digit dialing, thereby eliminating long-distance charges between offices. [Cisco Unity Unified Messaging](#) delivers e-mail, voice and fax messages to a single inbox for centralized access. “Account managers who are on the road can now manage and forward voicemail messages by e-mail or access their e-mails by cell phone. It is a great productivity booster,” says Kereliuk.

The [Cisco Unified Contact Center](#) delivers a comprehensive solution that provides intelligent routing and call analysis, helping to streamline calls to reach the most relevant resource. “With the old phone system, geographically separate call centers could not be

managed centrally, making it more challenging to provide consistent customer service across the country," says Kereliuk. "We now have a consolidated view of all incoming customer calls and the ability to route calls between offices and between employees with the necessary skill set needed to manage the calls. This enables us to provide even better customer service, which is what we are all about."

Business Results

First Canadian Title's [Cisco Unified Communications](#) deployment has already shown a prompt return on investment in terms of cost avoidance, reduced toll charges, ease of maintenance and increased productivity. A third party is no longer needed to perform phone system maintenance, because all moves, additions and changes are easily done in-house.

The [Cisco Unified Contact Center](#) is proving to be an asset to First Canadian Title by allowing for an unprecedented level of customer service. Benefits and features of the solution include:

One Number Calling - All incoming calls, which originate from a central First Canadian Title phone number, are redirected to the appropriate region and specialization in the company's various call centers across Canada.

It no longer matters where the call is answered across the country; First Canadian Title is now able to have anyone from any of its offices monitor, manage and report across its entire network. For instance, when East Coast employees go home for the day, calls can still be monitored and managed by those employees on the West Coast.

"This kind of 'follow the sun' support is exactly what we needed to enhance our customer service," says Kereliuk. "Our traditional phone systems could not offer this kind of flexibility."

Remote Call Center - Cisco Unified Contact Center allows any employee with a [Cisco IP Phone](#) to become a call center agent. With voice system capabilities as part of First Canadian Title's network, that same employee can work in the physical call center, or remotely at home, with no difference in call quality or disruption to business continuity. Further, if the offices are closed due to adverse weather or other unforeseen circumstances, First Canadian Title can continue to deliver the high level of customer service for which it is known.

Call Analysis - Excelling in customer service is a major goal for First Canadian Title. Missed or lost calls, or calls that sit on hold for too long, are rectified with [Cisco Unified Contact Center](#). The system also simultaneously monitors the agents available, including their specific skills, while keeping track of call wait time.

NEXT STEPS

To date, First Canadian Title has installed 100 [Cisco IP Phones](#) in three of its seven offices across Canada. The company intends to have all employees equipped with IP

technology within a year's time - something that the company considers very feasible, given the ease with which the initial offices were rolled out.

In September 2006, First Canadian Title held a ground-breaking ceremony to mark the expansion of its Oakville headquarters. Scheduled for completion in 2007, the expansion will add 35,000 square feet to the building and will accommodate an additional 175 employees, including those temporarily housed in the satellite office.

"Our explosive growth has been a tremendous boon to the company, but has also required a new investment in technology to support relocations. With Cisco Unified Communications, we can easily relocate groups of employees, accommodate department expansion or simply move folks around as we prepare for our construction phase at the home office," says Kereliuk. "The experience of opening our satellite office has revealed how easily we can build flexibility into the system."

Now that First Canadian Title has made the transition to [Unified Communications](#), the company is excited by the myriad of possibilities that the technology can offer. For example, the company can use the call center solution to decrease the amount of space needed to host physical call centers in other locations throughout Canada. Video capability can also be added to facilitate virtual meetings and reduce travel costs.

"The new Unified Communications system has shown us how flexible and agile we can be in delivering superior customer service," says Kereliuk. "Cisco's Unified Communications gives us a formidable new tool to help us continue to grow in our highly competitive market."

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