

# UC provider becomes its own customer

## How Siemens Enterprise Communications globalised its own Unified Communications

*Spun off into a joint venture between Siemens AG and The Gores Group in 2008, Siemens Enterprise Communication (SEN) had a March 2010 deadline to become a standalone operation. To cut costs and develop a sustainable cost model, this provider of Unified Communications solutions became its own customer, or rather the customer of its own service organisation. The rollout of UC to the 182 sites started in the US, which already had a strong business case, a more homogenous set-up and lots of home workers. The results were impressive – and fast: ROI of 145%, with a payback period of 24 months. It was time to launch the UC project in the EMEA region.*



*Frédéric Gilmont, Head of Global CIO Office, first presented this case story at the Users Only X-change on Unified Communications Rollout Experience, 22 April 2010*

## CHALLENGES

### Dealing with diversified infrastructures

The situation in the EMEA was very different from North America. “The communications set-up was dispersed, and each country had its own infrastructure. We had to bring them all together into a single system”, explains Head of the Global CIO Office, Frédéric Gilmont. But achieving this wasn’t straightforward at all. Each country used its own regional providers, for one thing. Plus, these local offices were not all pleased with the changes. “They were generally satisfied with their individual systems, which in many cases had already been depreciated. They didn’t want the expense of a new system”.

The call centres run by SEN offered an additional challenge. “Switching systems was very sensitive, as these centres offer services to our customers. We couldn’t risk any downtime at all”.

The IT department saw that the rollout needed to be addressed from two sides: both the technological and the human.

*"Implementing the SIP trunking was like a revolution for us! It really altered how we perceived UC. But the change wasn't easy for everyone. You have to manage change, with communication and training."*

*Frédéric Gilmont, Head of Global CIO Office, Siemens Enterprise Communications*



Siemens Enterprise Communications is a joint venture owned 51% by The Gores Group and 49% by Siemens AG. It was spun off by Siemens on October 1, 2008. It provides end-to-end enterprise communications, including voice, network infrastructure and security solutions that use open, standards-based architectures to unify communications and business applications.

As part of the joint venture agreement, the STAR program (STandalone Readiness) was launched. An important part of this program was implementing a unified communications system to the 12,000 SEN employees in 140 sites across the US and EMEA.

In the next phase of the rollout, the US and EMEA systems will be brought closer together.

## SOLUTIONS

### SIP trunking offers new perspective on UC

For the technology side, first the company implemented the UC infrastructure and hardware, to cut costs. At the same time, it moved to SIP trunking. "Our gateways are in Germany and the United States, so all calls go through there. This decision was almost a revolution! In some countries, like Belgium, we have no contact with local providers at all. In others, we have links only for survivability". Just as important was the cultural change as the management of the solution is now centralised. We also discussed how a global solution would appear to our customers. Now, the offices can give live demos on systems they use everyday. They like that part!"

The call centres were implemented in a later stage. "We migrated them more slowly. There was so much going on, with the number changes, etc. We made sure there was constant coverage."

## LESSONS LEARNT

### Manage technology and people

Despite being a provider of UC systems, Frederic insists that SEN learned lessons just like any other customer. "Because of our deadlines, we trained the users via web training but I would advise doing even more, with live training sessions and desk-side coaching."

Overall, however, "I am almost surprised at how well it has gone! The preparation for the rollout was excellent. Also we manage the whole system ourselves now, instead of having separate voice and IP. This lets us solve problems more quickly and easily, and gives us a more global solution."

More generally, Frederic reflects that rolling out to UC involves big change, which must be managed. "Each person has their own issues: local management, users, technical staff. You can't ignore this. You have to address it, with communication and training"