

Leading UK insurer expands global business while reducing IT costs



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CUSTOMER NAME · Beazley Group plc
LOCATION · London, UK
INDUSTRY · Financial Services
COMPANY SIZE · 480 employees worldwide
BUSINESS CHALLENGE · Rapid global expansion into multiple worldwide markets · IT strategy to consolidate resources into two locations · Improve business application performance for remote locations
NETWORK SOLUTION · Data Centre Network solution · Cisco Wide Area Application Services
BUSINESS VALUE · Reduces IT costs by more than £100,000 a year · Increases business efficiency and productivity by 10 percent · Increases staff efficiency by improving business application performance by 15 percent · 20 percent network optimisation improvement increases staff and application productivity · Removed the need to deploy servers to worldwide offices · Reduced time and cost associated with e-mail archiving by 30 percent

Beazley, one of the leading players in the insurance market, has grown its business from a single London location to 20 branch offices worldwide. Beazley uses a Cisco data centre solution that reduced IT costs by £100,000 a year and improved performance for centralised applications by 15 percent, increasing productivity and efficiency by around 10 percent.

Business Challenge

Beazley Group plc, founded in 1986, is one of the top five Lloyd's of London insurance companies. Its business covers marine, cargo, property and reinsurance, however it has also established itself as one of the world's leaders in speciality insurance – providing insurance for complex and unusual projects that require specialist knowledge. For example, Beazley's engineering insurance department is staffed by trained engineers who are able to go on site and assess quickly the insurance risk of a project, like the construction of a nuclear submarine. Beazley has its headquarters in London and 19 other offices around the world in Europe, the Far East, and the United States.

In just three years Beazley has grown dramatically from a single, London-based business to one that covers most regions of the world. The strategy is to continue expanding worldwide business. In the United States for example, Beazley aims to grow insurance premiums to £500 million by 2010. To support this expansion, Beazley needed a global communications network capable of delivering business information and applications to worldwide locations. Beazley's IT strategy was to consolidate data and applications into two data centres to reduce IT costs and improve quality of service to the business.

James Wright, Head of IT Operations at Beazley says, "Cisco is a strategic partner for us. We had already built our global network infrastructure using Cisco technology. We looked at other vendors, but felt that the Cisco application networking technology was emerging as one of the best on the market and offered us a better long-term solution. For instance, Cisco is constantly working with third parties to ensure integration with a wide range of applications."



Network Solution

Beazley has deployed a Cisco data centre solution across all of its worldwide locations to centralise data and applications into two data centres – London and Farmington, Connecticut. Beazley began by building a Cisco Wide Area Network (WAN) with Cisco Local Area Networks (LANs) at each location. But while the company's business applications were fine when there was just the London office, running the same applications over the global network was not as efficient. Users started to notice applications slowing down, while uploading Web applications or files took too long.

Beazley has several key in-house business trading applications which manage the company's insurance operations and are used by staff to create quotes, manage claims, and process all the relevant documentation.

To help improve the speed of access to these applications and data, Beazley used the Cisco WAN to deploy a Cisco Wide Area Application Services (WAAS) solution comprising Cisco Wide Area Application Engine (WAE) appliances in each location. Most data and applications – consisting of around 35 terabytes – are hosted in London with those specific to the US market run out of the data centre in Farmington which holds 8 terabytes of data.

One of the mission critical applications that uses the network infrastructure is a Cisco Unified Communications system which provides telephony for the business and comprises 600 Cisco Unified IP phones across all locations. Beazley also uses Cisco Unify to integrate voice and e-mail communication into a single system. The whole of Beazley's global network infrastructure is protected using Cisco security software.

The Cisco data centre solution at Beazley has been implemented by Logicalis, a Gold Certified Partner.

“Now we just couldn't take away the Cisco solution. The level of performance that it delivers has become the de facto standard for Beazley and in terms of where we are going as a business, Cisco is absolutely critical. It is strategically important to the business because it supports our global business growth and it is key to enabling IT to deliver value for money and support the business by centralising IT resources into two locations globally.”

James Wright, Head of IT Operations, Beazley

Business Results

The Cisco data centre solution has been a key element in enabling Beazley to expand its business internationally while streamlining IT management and operations.

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Cisco WAAS has enabled Beazley to host its trading application Beazley Trade in-house, saving the company around £100,000 a year. "I was shocked at the performance improvements on things like Web pages which, in some cases, were 14 seconds faster without the need to change any code. This is a significant increase and was heralded as a big success for IT," says Wright.



The company estimates that on average, Cisco WAAS has improved network performance by 20 percent resulting in increased productivity. Beazley Trade, for example, has seen a 15 percent increase in the number of quotes it can process and staff can now process quotes or policies faster. In the United States, this productivity improvement has contributed to steady growth in premiums by allowing systems to scale without having to add resources.

One of the key savings of the Cisco solution is removing the need to have or maintain expensive servers at each location. In Beazley's New York office there are over 20 Claims Litigators who review documents, data and e-mail to resolve claims, but there is no local file server. All the data is hosted in Farmington or London. Some of the files can be 10 megabytes in size and before having Cisco WAAS it would take 1.5 minutes to download this kind of file. Now performance is similar to having files hosted on a local server and files take just a few seconds to access.

Another significant saving was in managing e-mail archiving. Beazley's archived e-mails account for around 1.5 terabytes of data in the London data centre, and prior to Cisco WAAS were manually backed up using a tape driver with backup tapes stored off site. However, such is Wright's confidence in the reliability and performance of Cisco WAAS, e-mails are now replicated with the Farmington data centre, completely eliminating the whole data backup process and saving around 30 percent in time and costs associated with managing e-mail archiving.

Wright says that one of the unexpected benefits of Cisco WAAS is the ability to see and report on traffic across the network in a detailed way, saving Beazley the need to buy additional monitoring software.

PRODUCT LIST

Routing and Switching

- Cisco Catalyst 6509-E Switch
- Cisco Catalyst 3750 Series Switches
- Cisco 2800 Series Integrated Services Routers

Application Networking

- Cisco Wide Area Application Services (WAAS) Software
- Cisco Wide Area Application Engine (WAE) Appliances

Security and VPN

- Cisco ASA 5500 Series Adaptive Security Appliances
- Cisco PIX Firewall Software

Voice and IP Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager (CallManager)
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 7900 Series
- Cisco Unity



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