

Sleep Diagnostic Center Puts Communication Issues to Rest

Valley Sleep Center saves money and improves patient care with its all-in-one Cisco solution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
VALLEY SLEEP CENTER <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Industry: Healthcare• Location: Phoenix, AZ
CHALLENGE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Streamline patient care and improve communication between medical staff at multiple healthcare offices.
SOLUTION <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consolidating voice and data communications onto one network saves money and lets employees work together more efficiently and deliver better care.
RESULTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cisco® Smart Business Communications System brings together voice features, secure networking, and wireless connectivity in one easy-to-manage platform.

Challenge

In a fast-paced world, getting a full night's sleep is more critical than ever for maintaining good health. Valley Sleep Center has long been a leader in diagnosing and treating sleep disorders. Based in the Phoenix Metropolitan area, this innovative healthcare provider helps patients with sleep apnea, narcolepsy, and many other sleep disorders.

Valley Sleep Center relies on its office network to share patient information and files between its five Phoenix area locations. When its office network began showing signs of inability to meet the center's needs, the center needed to act fast to maintain its high patient care standards.

"We do a lot of interoffice VPN communications; exchanging health records, forms, general files, and share our medical and billing database systems between offices," says Gerald Fougner, the center's technical supervisor. "We tried some off-the-shelf consumer devices,

but they had so many problems that they were not worth the trouble. The devices would frequently go down and the virtual private network [VPN] tunnels would stop working."

When Valley Sleep Center prepared to open new offices, the center saw an opportunity to not only upgrade its data network, but improve all of its phone communications as well.

"We had been using an analog phone system with a limited number of lines," says Fougner. "If we had to call another office with a patient issue, that would use up two phone lines. If the patient was waiting on hold for an answer, we might tie up three phone lines to resolve one simple issue."

Valley Sleep Center needed an affordable solution that would support secure, reliable data networking between its offices, as well as phone and voicemail communication. The solution would have to be easy to manage, yet scalable to support new office sites as the company grew.

"The Cisco solution lets us consolidate all our voice and data onto one system, so now we pay for just one backup phone line at each location, while sharing a centralized secure PRI connection for voice communications. I'm saving a lot of money on phone charges, yet have more lines available."

— Gerald Fougner, Technical Supervisor, Valley Sleep Center

Results

Valley Sleep Center replaced its aging phones, routers, and wireless equipment with a complete solution from Cisco. Designed specifically for small businesses, the Cisco solution lets the center reduce communications costs by using its Internet connection for all of its voice and data networking.

“The savings are significant,” says Fougner. “We were paying about US\$50 a month for each and every business analog phone line at our offices. The Cisco solution lets us consolidate all our voice and data onto one system, so now we pay for a dedicated data line and a backup phone line at each location, while sharing a secure Primary Rate Interface (PRI) connection for all phones at all our offices. I’m saving a lot of money on phone charges, yet I have more lines available due to the advantages of DID Technology.”

Powerful dialing and call-handling features help employees save time when they are collaborating on patient care.

“We no longer have to dial a full phone number to reach another office,” says Fougner. “Employees can simply dial a colleague’s extension and get an issue resolved right away. If a patient calls in with a question, it’s easy to transfer them directly to the person who can best solve their problem.”

Employees also save time sharing patient records and updating healthcare information on the network.

“Sending files was very slow using our previous VPN devices,” says Fougner. “If we wanted to move a file between labs, our network would grind to a dead stop. Switching to Cisco Smart Business Communications made things a lot easier for us to take our business processes to the next level.”

The new solution has also enabled Valley Sleep Center to enhance its network security, which is always a concern for healthcare organizations.

“Before we upgraded our network, people often emailed files, which might leave information exposed on the Internet,” says Fougner. “Now we have interconnected our labs with VPN tunnels, so we can easily share information between sites, while keeping it protected within our network.”

Managing the phone system has become much easier as well, because Valley Sleep Center can use plug-and-play Cisco phones to change or update its extensions in seconds.

“The previous system was a nightmare,” says Fougner. “We were constantly calling IT people to add a user or move a phone to another area in the office. It was expensive, and we had to wait all day for them to show up. Now if I need to move an extension, I can just unplug the phone, walk to a network jack on the wall, and plug it back in.”

Solution

To develop its new network, Valley Sleep Center worked closely with its Cisco partner, InVision Technology Solutions. InVision is a professional IT service provider, focusing on small business solutions, and was very familiar with Valley Sleep Center’s business needs.

“We considered other products from other vendors, but the more we worked with InVision, the better we felt about how they could support us,” says Fougner. “It is important to work with a good partner whom you can trust and rely on.”

InVision recommended the Smart Business Communications System, which is based on the Cisco Unified Communications 500 Series for Small Business.

“We realized that the Cisco UC500 had all the features we needed built in,” says Fougner. “You don’t usually see a full-featured package for small businesses, and we were pleased to see that Cisco offered one.”

The Cisco solution enabled Valley Sleep Center to migrate from five separate network devices to one device. Now employees at any location can use the secure network to place a phone call or interoffice calls, access system databases and files, and access proprietary sleep diagnostic systems.

"We have cool Cisco Unified IP Phones 7965 with nice color screens and lots of powerful call-handling features," says Fougner. "We also use our network to exchange patient files or update medical reports. If we need a transcription, our offsite employees can log into the network using a VPN connection and securely access files on our database."

Affordable finance offers provided by Cisco CapitalSM enabled Valley Sleep Center to acquire its solution with virtually no up-front investment.

"The ability to get zero percent financing in this tough economy was one of the reasons we were able to expand our offices this year," says Fougner.

Next Steps

The Cisco solution was designed to support growing businesses, and Valley Sleep Center is already taking advantage of its scalable new network.

"We are still in the process of growing," says Fougner. "We are expanding from two offices to five in just one year. It's a big initiative, and we could not have done it using our older communications system."

With its flexible Cisco network in place, Valley Sleep Center is confident that it will continue to support a growing number of patients with the superior care that they need.

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco solutions for small businesses, visit www.cisco.com/smallbusiness or contact your authorized Cisco partner.



Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
San Jose, CA

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems (USA) Pte. Ltd.
Singapore

Europe Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV Amsterdam,
The Netherlands

Cisco has more than 200 offices worldwide. Addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers are listed on the Cisco Website at www.cisco.com/go/offices.

Cisco and the Cisco Logo are trademarks of Cisco Systems, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the U.S. and other countries. A listing of Cisco's trademarks can be found at www.cisco.com/go/trademarks. Third party trademarks mentioned are the property of their respective owners. The use of the word partner does not imply a partnership relationship between Cisco and any other company. (1005R)