


# A VISION OF CALL CENTER SUCCESS



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Migration to a Cisco unified call center, along with professional management services, takes customer contact to the next level at CooperVision.

## At a Glance

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**COMPANY:** CooperVision

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**HEADQUARTERS:** Fairport, N.Y.

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**EMPLOYEES:** 6,800

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**I.T. STAFF:** 140

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**BUSINESS:** In existence for five decades, CooperVision is the world's third largest contact lens manufacturer, and the number-one manufacturer of toric contact lenses for the correction of astigmatism. From its extensive network of facilities in 31 countries across five continents, CooperVision distributes high-quality lenses virtually everywhere contact lenses are worn.

Customer service is a key to success in any industry. It needs to be a part of a company's culture. And at CooperVision, it's a concept that has helped the Fairport, N.Y.-based organization grow from a niche contact lens manufacturer to a market leader in more than 31 countries.

As with many companies, CooperVision's call center is a principal vehicle for building positive customer relationships. However, after migrating from a traditional time-division multiplexing (TDM) phone and contact center to an IP-based system in 2004, the company encountered some issues with call center downtime.

Fortunately, a better solution came along three years later when CooperVision migrated to Cisco's Unified Communications Manager (UCM) (formerly Cisco CallManager) and Unified Contact Center Enterprise (UCCE). Shortly thereafter, the company also came to recognize the benefits of third-party professional UC call center assessment, planning and management services.

The result: Downtime, stability and architectural issues have all but disappeared. What's more, CooperVision is now able to take full advantage of the scalability and customization advantages of Cisco's IP contact center solution and not fret over dropped calls.

### Communication Issues

One of CooperVision's business strategies is listening carefully to customers and addressing their needs quickly. "We position ourselves as the most flexible and easiest contact lens business to deal with," says Steve Baxter, its director of global infrastructure.

The company prides itself on its ability to answer 92 percent of calls in 20 seconds or less and complete most customer calls in less than three minutes. "We take about 500,000 to 750,000 phone orders per year," Baxter says. "We also have call center lines for issue resolution, credit and expert specialty lens consultation. And we use the call center for our internal IT help desk."

To streamline customer services and address customer needs more rapidly, seven years ago CooperVision moved from a distributed legacy call center and phone system to its first IP contact center. "Unfortunately, the company's first foray into IP telephony did not meet overall expectations," says Jill Brizee, formerly director of CooperVision's call center and now director of sales administration.

"We were losing money because of all the downtime experienced with the phone system," she adds. "Downtime occurred about three times per week on average and often ranged anywhere from five minutes up to an hour. We hoped customers would call back. However, we never could be certain if they did."

In 2007, CooperVision migrated to a Cisco contact center solution consisting of Cisco's UCM IP-based private branch

exchange (PBX) for call processing and UCCE for state-of-the-art call center functionality.

Designed for medium- to large-sized businesses, Cisco's UCCE offers a host of call center functions over an IP infrastructure. The combination of multichannel automatic call distributor (ACD) functionality plus IP telephony, in a unified solution, allowed CooperVision to rapidly deploy a distributed contact center infrastructure designed to handle customer inquiries 24 hours a day.

"When the Cisco Unified Communications Manager and Unified Contact Center Enterprise were installed, downtime issues were eliminated," Brizee says. By allowing the company to successfully address thousands of customer transactions each month, the technology was helping to support the organization's ongoing objectives.

#### Cisco UCCE capabilities include:

- Customer segmentation and monitoring of resource availability
- Delivery of each contact to the most appropriate resource
- Comprehensive customer profiles using contact-related data
- Routing to the most appropriate resource to meet customer needs based on real-time conditions (such as agent skills, availability and queue lengths).
- Presence integration to increase caller satisfaction

### Fine Tuning

CooperVision saw immediate improvements in contact center performance following implementation of the Cisco solution. However, even with no downtime, call stability was still an occasional issue.

"Occasionally in the middle of a call, we'd get a sudden blip and busy signal," Brizee notes. CooperVision had hired a managed services provider to monitor the system, but it was not able to figure out the cause of the call instability issues.

That's when CooperVision's IT department made the decision to consult CDW's professional services group to help track down the problem. After assessing the CooperVision installation, it became obvious that the current configuration was not architected as effectively as it could be.

"The system had been configured the quickest way, but not the best way," Brizee says.

Baxter agrees, stating that standards were inconsistent. "There were mixed results because we didn't have the best understanding of dial plans plus class and quality of service during the rollout," he says. "We've since learned that everything really needs to be standardized and configured consistently with an ability to scale or you'll quickly notice things you don't like."

Over time, the architectural issues only got worse, particularly with different UCM and UCCE versions in different locations interacting with one another. "With all those versions, it had become very difficult to provide support and track down stability issues," says Baxter.

CDW's professional services group worked with the CooperVision IT team to rearchitect the system and bring everything up-to-date. "We took three different versions of Unified Communications Manager in three different locations and consolidated them into one cluster based on the latest version at the time," says Troy Harvey, CDW advanced technology account executive.

"We also upgraded the UCCE and voicemail servers to the latest version with cluster failover and added some gatekeepers to simplify call control," Harvey says. CDW then instructed CooperVision's IT staff on the new architecture and best practices as well as how to support it.

"The CDW team really dug into our installation, system by system, and solved the problem issue by issue," says Brizee. "They streamlined everything and made the whole setup much cleaner and more effective."

"The system has been stabilized, a good dial plan has been put in place and all voice quality issues have been eliminated," Baxter adds. "We've gone back to the way it was when people simply took for granted that things just work."

Cleaning up the system not only made calls more stable, but empowered CooperVision to add Cisco's Unified Meeting Place conferencing system to the setup. A high-end web- and voice-conferencing solution, Cisco's Unified Meeting Place works with CooperVision's existing infrastructure. It's a cost-effective solution installed on the company's own servers.

"I had been asked several times to roll out Unified Meeting Place," Baxter says. "But I had been hesitant to add anything on top of a system and infrastructure that already wasn't quite right."

With CDW's help, the installation went smoothly and CooperVision staffers, once skeptical of using an in-house conferencing system, started using it regularly. What's more, the company's conferencing costs have been slashed on average \$50,000 a month, now that it doesn't have to pay for an outside conferencing service.

## Expert Monitoring

With the positive results from the system rearchitecting, CooperVision moved toward transferring ongoing system management from its current managed services provider to CDW Remote Managed Services (RMS).

"We originally outsourced management to a large telecom vendor, but they didn't yet have the expertise to deliver," Baxter says. "We visited the CDW network operations center in Madison, Wis., and were very impressed.

"The call center is one of our chief sources of revenue," he adds. "We had to do whatever we could to make it run well. And we knew we weren't in a position to hire our own voice engineers."

CooperVision selected CDW's Availability Management (Gold) level of service. This makes CDW responsible for ongoing system monitoring, alerts, patch installation and management as well as addressing any problems and repairs that may come up.

"We manage all CooperVision UCCE servers as well as associated call center UCM servers," says CDW Managed Services Solution Specialist Andy Brolin. "This includes all aspects of the chassis, including physical hardware, the operating system and the entire Cisco application layer."

CDW monitoring goes well beyond the red light-green light paradigm delivered by many basic systems. This includes monitoring the majority of monitorable events within the server or device chassis, for example, threshold and custom monitoring around syslog outputs, according to Brolin.

"We want to catch technical issues before they become business issues."

CDW RMS has also taken over patch management for CooperVision's Cisco telephony systems. "Cisco's unified communications patch management is fairly complex," Brolin adds. "Our staff has been trained to understand what's coming from Cisco, vet patches to ensure they're appropriate for CooperVision's environment and test all patches in our test lab before we apply them to their systems."

In addition, CDW RMS does all patching within CooperVision's change management window, with full documentation and a back-out plan. This mature approach assures that new patches don't interfere with any other elements of the infrastructure.

Finally CDW RMS has taken over all the engineering support required to maintain the operational health of the system. "No matter how big or small the issue, we're responsible for resolving it," Brolin says. Even if a server has to be replaced, CDW will call Cisco to initiate the return, coordinate the replacement and supervise installation of the software.

For CooperVision, CDW's proactive monitoring and management ensures that the company's staff is kept up-to-speed on all issues and activity. "If something happens to a server or Unified Communications Manager, we are contacted and the event or issues are described to us, along with how it was resolved and what the results are," Brizee adds.

## Competitive Advantage

Thanks to an architecture based on best practices and effective ongoing monitoring, CooperVision has been able to take full advantage of the impressive customer service enhancement features offered by Cisco UCCE. These include remote agents, skills, based routing, and top-notch monitoring and reporting features.

"Our previous system offered only 'canned' call center reports, with no customization," Brizee says. "We couldn't get much live data. We couldn't get reports on service levels or information on how many calls service agents were taking. We also couldn't sort call center data by skills group. If something wasn't in one of the few canned reports, we were just out of luck."

When CooperVision switched to Cisco's call center reporting system, Brizee was impressed with its depth and flexibility. "We could get anything we needed," she says. "There was almost too much information at times. But it was very easy to cut out the columns and fields we didn't need."

Improved reporting enabled CooperVision to get much more visibility into the performance of different aspects of the call center and make improvements. "The combination of uptime and effective reporting was a huge improvement," she adds.

CooperVision also has superior agent monitoring capabilities, thanks to Cisco's UCCE and some custom coding. "Our supervisors can see who is on the phone, how long they've been on a call, if they're available or unavailable, how long they've been in their current state and how many calls they've taken – all at a glance," Brizee says. "The data updates every three seconds."

Presence and rules-based call routing is also much simpler to configure and use with Cisco's UCCE than it was with the previous system. It allows calls to be routed automatically to the most appropriate agent group and agents with the expertise and available time to handle them.

The use of Cisco's Remote Agent feature has enabled CooperVision to take advantage of home-based agents with specialty National Contact Lens Examiner certification and expertise to help customers design complex custom lenses. "Each agent works out of his or her home but is connected to our call queues," Brizee reports.

CooperVision can now also record the remote agent calls, which it was unable to do with the previous system. "That's really beneficial for evaluating agents and putting together monthly scorecards," she adds.

CooperVision is also taking advantage of unified messaging so call center agents and other employees receive all their voice and e-mail messages in the same place. This allows them to respond much faster and more effectively.

"Our goal is to be known as a company that's easy to work with," Baxter adds. The combination of Cisco UCCE and best practices from CDW's professional services group is helping CooperVision be just that.



### The Right Partnership

CooperVision's partnership with CDW's professional services group has been significant to the company's call center effectiveness and superior customer service. "We've been through many vendors who say they can deliver, but whether they do or not is often up for debate," says Steve Baxter, director of global infrastructure at CooperVision.

"What we really like about CDW is that the people are well-trained and use very consistent processes," he says. "They are very easy to work with and very straightforward about what they can and can't do."

"We achieve consistent, quality results, in large part, because we leverage a mature IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) framework," says CDW Managed Services Solution Specialist Andy Brolin. "CDW's Managed Services practice embraced ITIL 10 years ago. Our ITIL foundation provides the strong, market-consistent base for successful and efficient delivery of managed services."

"The relationship has freed up our team to work much more closely with the business and take on new strategic initiatives," Baxter adds. "Rather than spending a lot of time keeping up with patching and day-to-day maintenance, we can be working on initiatives that add to the bottom line."

