



Data Sheet

Cisco Mobile Agent

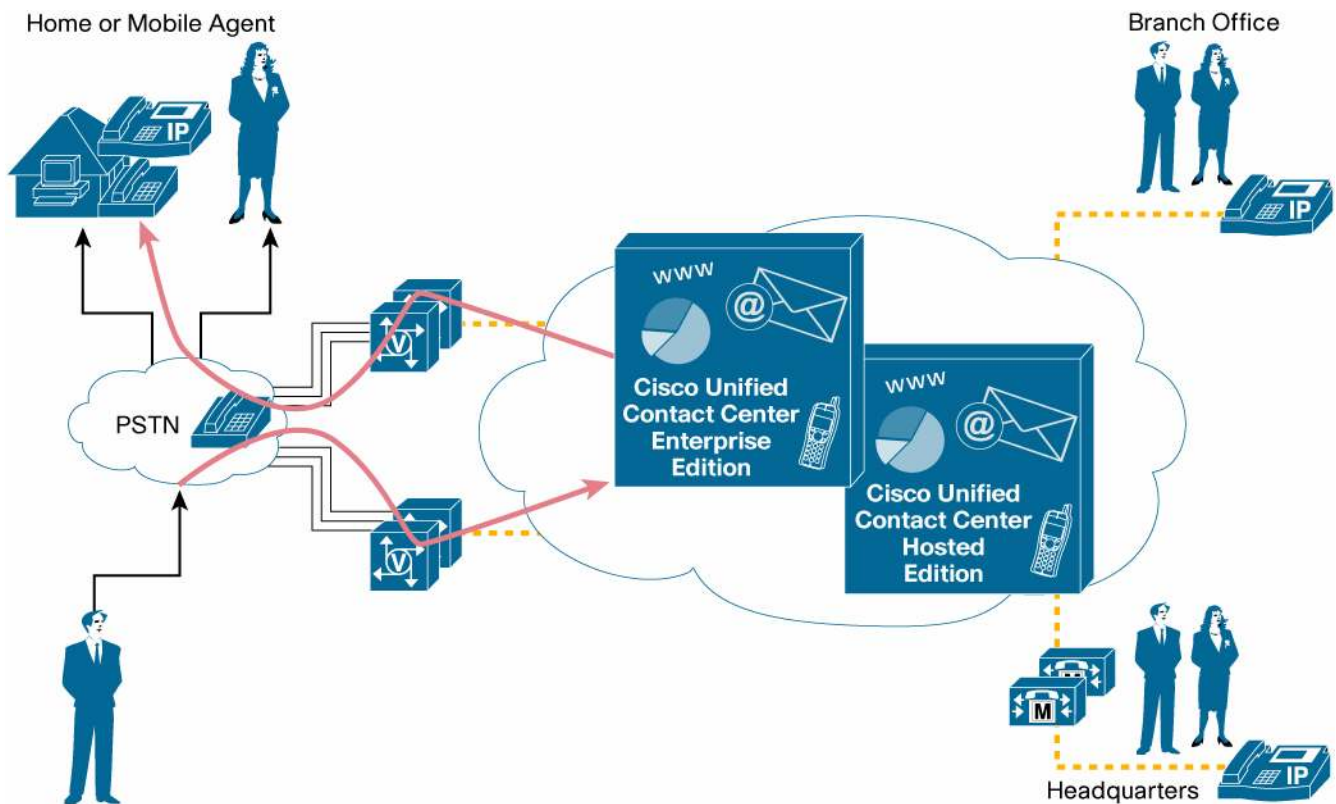
The Cisco® Unified Communications system of voice and IP communications products and applications enables organizations to communicate more effectively—enabling them to streamline business processes, reach the right resource the first time and impact the top and bottom line. The Cisco Unified Communications portfolio is an integral part of the Cisco Business Communications Solution—an integrated solution for organizations of all sizes which also includes network infrastructure, security, and network management products, wireless connectivity, and a lifecycle services approach, along with flexible deployment and outsourced management options, end-user and partner financing packages, and third-party communications applications.

Today's contact center is about more than just handling multichannel contact—voice—inbound and outbound, Web, and e-mail at a dedicated facility; it is about extending these communication channels to a remote user. The workforce today is highly mobile and the network needs to accommodate and provide capabilities to allow remote agents to interact with customers. Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise and Cisco Unified Contact Center Hosted offer business customers the choice of interacting with contact center agents by telephone, Web, voice callback, voice over IP (VoIP), text chat, or e-mail, wherever the agents are located—home, remote office, branch office, or Internet kiosk—with Cisco Mobile Agent.

Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise and Cisco Unified Contact Center Hosted are strategic platforms that help customers move into the next phase of customer contact—beyond today's contact center to a Customer Interaction Network. A distributed, IP-based customer service infrastructure, the Customer Interaction Network comprises a continuously evolving suite of innovative, multichannel services and customer-relationship-management applications. These services and applications provide enhanced responsiveness and streamlined customer exchanges to help organizations deliver superior customer service. A Customer Interaction Network extends customer service capabilities across the entire organization, giving businesses a more integrated and collaborative approach to customer satisfaction.

Enterprises increasingly rely on home offices and remote offices for connectivity of day extenders and part- and full-time teleworker agents. In order for these agents to be optimally productive, they require access to the same services used at the corporate headquarters contact center site, including data, e-mail, collaboration tools, and voice and video services. In addition, the delivery of the communicating channels such as voice needs to be flexible enough to cater to any endpoint the agent might use—a home analog phone, a home IP phone, a cell phone, or other types of devices. To provide these capabilities, Cisco Systems® offers Cisco Mobile Agent for Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise and Cisco Unified Contact Center Hosted. The result is an end-to-end solution that can help guarantee the timely delivery of voice and data to remote agents cost-effectively and reliably. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Cisco Mobile Agent



MOTIVATION FOR MOBILE AGENTS

Contact centers are constantly striving to reduce costs, improve agent productivity, and retain agents within the organization. These goals can be furthered by providing agents the flexibility to work from home with similar quality, function, performance, convenience, and security as are available in the corporate headquarters contact center.

Occasional and full-time remote agents require less office space. By providing a work environment in the home office, agents can optimally manage their work schedules, allowing for higher productivity (less affected by office distractions) and greater job satisfaction. This extension of the headquarters contact center to remote agents is the objective of the Cisco Mobile Agent offering.

ADVANTAGES OF CISCO MOBILE AGENT

- A remote agent might not have access to IP at all times. IP at home is pervasive in certain areas that have access to several broadband options—cable, DSL, etc. In such cases, extending the corporate IP telephone system from home with comparable voice quality could be a challenge and could limit an agent working from a remote location. (Secure voice delivery to the home is addressed by a different Cisco offering—the Cisco Remote Tele-worker a solution that uses full end-to-end secure VPN connectivity and quality of voice for agents using IP phones at home.) Cisco Mobile Agent can send calls to any phone—analogue public switched telephone network (PSTN) or cell phone—and thereby extend the reach of a centralized IP contact center.
- An agent at home or a remote location is more likely to use a different handset with different capabilities than an IP handset. Most full- and part-time occasional agents are familiar with a non-IP handset. Allowing agents to use the device they are most comfortable with reduces training costs, increases flexibility, and makes the agent agnostic to technology.

- With the advent of thin-client desktops and Citrix-based and Windows Terminal Server-based desktops, the remote agents do not need to keep a full desktop or laptop at the remote locations. As long as the agents can access the corporate contact center computer-telephony-integration (CTI) application, data can be delivered to the thin-client desktop.
- The solution includes all data and voice security within the corporate firewall. IP Security (IPSec), transparent LAN services (TLS), public key infrastructure (PKI), and Message Digest Algorithm 5 (MD5) encryption; support for antivirus; Cisco Security Agent support for IP telephony; and IP contact center and prescribed SAFE Blueprint from Cisco mandated security best-practice guidelines in the corporate centralized contact center make this solution a secure platform to extend voice and data to remote agents anywhere.
- Cisco Mobile Agent adds the capability to enable temporary agents during seasonal high call volume who can be brought on line with reduced startup costs. Agents can choose their destination phone number during signup time and change the number as often as they want, giving the contact center the flexibility to adapt to a fast-moving mobile workforce.
- Contact center agents can be displaced from their normal workplace by natural events (such as winter storms, hurricanes, or earthquakes), health alerts (such as SARS), man-made events (such as travel restrictions or traffic conditions), or simply by family-related events such as sick children or home repairs. These disruptions can significantly affect an organization's processes. Providing contact center agents with central-site-equivalent access to applications and services in geographically dispersed locations (such as home offices) creates a built-in back-up plan to keep business processes functioning in unforeseen circumstances.
- A traditional competitor solution involves provisioning a device in the home to secure the management of the two PSTN lines. Cisco Mobile Agent does not need any more than an existing PSTN phone line and an existing broadband line to set up an agent. These savings further add to the overall return on investment (ROI) gained by centralizing the contact center.
- In the past, contact centers recruited employees in the locations where corporate offices or regional offices were located. It can be difficult to find the right skills and have them in the right cities—or to find resources willing to relocate. With Cisco Mobile Agent, contact centers can hire skilled employees where they live, and integrate remote workers into geographically dispersed teams with access to equivalent corporate applications.
- Cisco Mobile Agent also helps contact centers keep the agents in-country rather than offshoring operations. Reducing capital costs in building the large contact center headquarters and provisioning skilled remote contact center agents increases productivity and reduces training costs.

CISCO UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Using the Cisco Lifecycle Services approach, Cisco Systems and its partners offer a broad portfolio of end-to-end services to support the Cisco Unified Communications system. These services are based on proven methodologies for deploying, operating, and optimizing IP communications solutions. Upfront planning and design services, for example, can help you meet aggressive deployment schedules and minimize network disruption during implementation. Operate services reduce the risk of communications downtime with expert technical support. Optimize services enhance solution performance for operational excellence. Cisco and its partners offer a system-level service and support approach that can help you create and maintain a resilient, converged network that meets your business needs.

To summarize, Cisco Mobile Agent extends the advantages of VPNs (such as cost savings, data application support, extended availability, security, and privacy) to provide secure enterprise voice services to full- and part-time remote contact center agents.

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