



SUCCESS STORY

THE LEUKEMIA & LYMPHOMA SOCIETY INCREASES EFFICIENCY WITH CISCO SOLUTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CUSTOMER NAME

- The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

INDUSTRY

- Healthcare

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Raise additional funds
- Enhance patient and family support services
- Improve business communications and maintain monthly network operating costs

NETWORK SOLUTION

- High-performance Cisco switches and routers
- Cisco VPN concentrators

BUSINESS VALUE

- Enhanced communication facilitates patient and family support services and fund-raising event coordination
- Network infrastructure supports new technologies for enhancing business operations and reducing operating expenses

ABSTRACT

A Cisco foundation network of high-speed switches, routers, and VPN concentrators helps the The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society secure funding and patient support activity.

Business Challenge

For the estimated 670,950 Americans now living with blood-related cancers, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society provides help for today and hope for the future. Since 1949, the society has raised more than \$358 million to fund blood cancer research, education, and patient services that improve the quality of life for patients and their families.

Like any other enterprise, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society depends on its computer network for business operations. In 2002, the society was managing all its activities with a 58-node, 56-kbps Frame Relay-based WAN that linked the Society's White Plains, NY headquarters to its chapters. The network offered limited performance and reliability, making it difficult to generate timely, effective patient services programs and coordinate fund raisers to maximize donations. To meet its mission and fund raising efforts, the Society needed a high-speed, highly reliable network linking all 110 offices.

Even though The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society is the world's largest voluntary health organization dedicated to funding blood cancer research, its information technology (IT) budget was limited. To continue allocating the maximum funding to finding a cure and providing patient services, the Society had to build the new network without increasing monthly costs.

“With the new Cisco network foundation, we connected all 110 locations with up to T1 speeds for the same price that we were paying for 58 locations with 56 kbps speeds.”

—David Carhart, Senior Director of Advanced Technology, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

Network Solution

Cisco Systems® met The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's network requirements with an innovative solution that replicates a single design of high-speed network infrastructure products to multiple offices. "I had worked with Cisco in the past and knew that Cisco was the right fit, so we went straight with Cisco," says David Carhart, Senior Director of Advanced Technology for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. "Nobody else has products that can compete with Cisco."

Replicating the same configuration to each Chapter reduced the price and complexity of upgrading existing network nodes and adding offices to the network. This plan eliminated the time and cost of preparing individual configuration designs, and facilitated an aggressive schedule of adding four chapters per month to the new WAN. The implementation went so smoothly that Cisco® exceeded this target in some months.

The flexibility of Cisco products was a crucial factor in using a common configuration, because The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Chapters vary in size from 6 to 50 employees. All Chapters were outfitted with Cisco Catalyst® 2950 Series switches for high-speed office connections, and Cisco 1700 Series routers that can be easily adapted to the performance requirements of each Chapter. "The ability to just pop different cards into the 1700s for different speeds was a real advantage," says Carhart.

The Cisco 1700 Series routers were also equipped with a dial backup option to ensure network access even if the primary connection failed. The dial backup option is provided through a Cisco 7140 VPN router in each Chapter, which also supports employees working at home or at other offices. Employees use a VPN client for secure connectivity. Remote access helps these "road warriors" provide patient services programs and manage fund-raising events.

The White Plains, NY headquarters office uses a Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series Switch for high-speed, scalable, multilayer Ethernet switching, and two Cisco Catalyst 3550 Series switches for T1 switching. The Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series provides the resiliency, integrated security, and manageability required for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's network core. One Catalyst 3550 switch supports the six T1 lines that feed into the core through the VPN, and the other supports four T1 lines used for Internet access.

To provide redundancy in case the headquarters node becomes unavailable, the headquarters configuration is replicated at the San Francisco and Richmond, Virginia offices, which use Cisco Catalyst 3550 Series switches in place of the Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series. If the headquarters node goes down for any reason, traffic from each chapter will be routed through one of these other two locations, ensuring uninterrupted network operations.

Cisco PIX® security appliances located at the headquarters facility provides security for the network. As a healthcare provider, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society must ensure a secure network to meet expectations of patients, donors and employees for personal privacy.

Ease of management is also important to The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, as the limited IT budget cannot support a large network operations staff. Carhart manages the network himself, with the help of CiscoWorks network management software that automatically pages him to warn of potential problems. "Most of the time I notify the chapter before they know anything is wrong," says Carhart.

BUSINESS VALUE

With all Society offices online, the average connectivity speed for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society WAN rose from 56 kbps to 768 kbps with 99.7 percent availability, without increasing monthly costs. "With the new Cisco network foundation, we connected all 110 locations with up to T1 speeds for the same price that we were paying for 58 locations with 56 kbps speeds," says Carhart.

The high speed and network reliability ensures that critical operations such as grant applications and reviews meet deadlines. Adding the same number of nodes using the existing technology would have raised WAN access costs from \$50,000 per month to \$150,000 per month, without increasing performance or reliability.

NEXT STEPS

The next step for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society network is adding voice over IP (VoIP) communication, with a pilot program planned for September 2004. The Society expects the VoIP solution to dramatically reduce telephone expenses, which are very high because of the extensive telephone coordination required for fund-raising events. "There are probably a couple of hundred phone calls per day between headquarters and all the field offices," says Carhart. "We'll see major savings from the VoIP."

Another consideration for the future, budget permitting is wireless technology. "Keeping our costs as low as possible is critical, and Cisco gets me great pricing," he says. "That's more money we can use to help find a cure to these diseases."

This customer story is based on information provided by The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and describes how that particular organization benefits from the deployment of Cisco products. Many factors may have contributed to the results and benefits described; Cisco does not guarantee comparable results elsewhere.

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