

CUSTOMER SOLUTION CASE STUDY



Summary



Customer:
Dimension Data

Country or Region:
South Africa – JHB

Industry:
Technology

Company Profile:
Dimension Data is a specialist IT services and solution provider founded in 1982. The South African founded company has core competencies in networking, security, Microsoft solutions, customer interactive solutions, data centre and storage solutions and unified communications technologies and houses unique skills in consulting, systems integration and managed services that are used to tailor customised client solutions. Dimension Data has a rich history in networking that has positioned it as a global leader in Internet Protocol (IP) convergence, including unified communications solutions.

Business Situation:
Dimension Data maintains a best-practice framework for IP telephony deployment and was looking to develop an effective platform for communicating this methodology to its global teams of solution engineers and sales consultants. The required system would not only allow for the maintenance of an effective knowledgebase but also facilitate technical guidance, project management and provide access to resources such as software tools and materials for delivery, marketing and training. This would support all sales and deployment activities in delivering IP telephony solutions to international markets including the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Africa, Australasia and Asia.

Technologies used:

Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (MOSS) 2007

An Effective Methodology Platform

Client Background

As a global leader in converged communications Dimension Data maintains teams of experienced solution engineers and consultants in international markets stretching across all continents. The company relies on effective tools and processes to support these teams including communications' platforms and the development of a global methodology used in customer engagements. Dimension Data maintains this best-practice framework for Internet Protocol (IP) telephony in the form of its Internet Protocol Telephony Deployment Methodology (IPTDM) that holistically covers best-practices and experience and provides resources for all areas of IP telephony deployment, from pre-sales to implementation. 3fifteen was approached to develop a platform for supporting this methodology and making it available to Dimension Data employees globally, while providing them with delivery and project management tools and the ability to collaborate.

Driving Efficiency and Consistency

Development and Alliance Manager for Dimension Data's Global Solutions division, Dave Fincham explains that the IPTDM methodology is used to ensure efficiency and consistency in Dimension Data's IP telephony projects worldwide. The framework is focused on Dimension Data's competencies with Cisco IP Telephony technology and provides a set of processes and tools that support the sales and deployment of IP telephony solutions.

Dimension Data brought together its top converged communications practitioners to develop a set of best practices and formulate the resulting methodology framework and decided on the best platform to facilitate the sharing of this methodology with international teams of engineers and consultants.

Fincham says that a solution was also required to enable the further development and enhancement of the shared methodology according to lessons learnt. International teams often encounter challenges in deploying IP Telephony and should be able to share their experiences with other teams. This allows for problems to be solved rapidly through collaboration with other engineers and for further streamlining of implementations through experience gained through other engagements.

The desired solution would have to bring together a knowledgebase, communications platform, project management and delivery tools.

Dimension Data decided that a website portal application would be the best way to address this need and chose 3fifteen to develop a portal system based on Microsoft technology. 3fifteen is a Microsoft Gold Certified partner in Data Management solutions (BI), Business Process and Integration, Information Worker solutions, Microsoft Business solutions and Customised Application development.

Unlocking the power of portals

3fifteen developed a customised portal solution for Dimension Data based on the Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007. The SharePoint platform allows for secure and robust portal creation and management.

The system was designed to handle hundreds of users and to accommodate the management of multiple concurrent projects, as Dimension Data would typically have over two hundred IP Telephony projects running at any one time. In addition, projects would run for varying time frames depending on size and complexity and could involve up to twenty employees at any given time.

3fifteen developed both a master site, which is available for access over the Internet to all Dimension Data employees, and a closed project site accessible only by specified Dimension Data employees and federated users.

The master site serves as a repository for tools used by Dimension Data in its IP Telephony deployments, including methodology resources, and allows for the posting of issues, requests and enhancements along with supporting documentation. The project site, on the other hand, is used by project members for the duration of a customer deployment. This site enables users to view the

"This system effectively allows Dimension Data to maintain global consistency in delivering IP telephony solutions. 3fifteen developed the solution, pushing at the boundaries of what can be achieved with MOSS 2007."

Dave Fincham
Development and Alliance
Manager (PS), Global Solutions,
Dimension Data

phases, tasks of those phases, methodology documentation linked to the tasks and phases and the responsibilities assigned to the various people involved throughout the progress of the deployment.

The project site was developed so that templates and tasks are automatically populated when initially accessed and can then be altered according to specific project needs thus saving time.

In addition, the system supports multiple languages for Dimension Data employees internationally.

Various roles were specified on the system according to member responsibilities. This disambiguates the functions and responsibilities of various team members. For example, when an engineer logs into the system they are able to access their role and are then provided with a clear outline of their expected responsibilities for a project, as well as resources that are provided accordingly.

A successful implementation

Dimension Data tested the portal environment internally and then conducted a three month pilot phase where the system was used in projects and fine-tuned by 3fifteen. The system went live in February 2008.

Fincham says that the system will provide Dimension Data with increased efficiency and consistency in deploying Internet Protocol Telephony solutions.

Using the portal solution Dimension Data is able to maintain the IPTDM online and instantly share it with employees around the world. The methodology is also open to feedback and can be constantly improved according to experiences in the field. The system also provides global visibility of what tools and enhancements are being developed, allowing distributed resources to leverage the effort of other countries thereby reducing the level of effort and associated unnecessary costs incurred in duplicated development efforts.

Effective project management is also enhanced with the portal system. Project members are able to log into the system, receive a clear breakdown of their responsibilities, receive all related resources and tools, and managers are able to clearly track project progress and related communications.

Fincham says that the effort involved in taking a project from kick-off to project completion for IP telephony deployments will be drastically reduced thanks to the use of the system.

3fifteen has provided Dimension Data with a stable, effective and tailored platform for disseminating their methodology, managing projects and facilitating communications tracking and the maintenance of online resources.