

## Buckley Associates

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*Bob Buckley, Director of IT, Buckley Associates*

### THE CHALLENGE

For almost 40 years, Buckley Associates has manufactured and distributed a complete array of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning products to customers across the northeastern United States. With headquarters in Massachusetts, the company also has sales offices and warehouses in Connecticut, New York, New Hampshire and Maine. As Buckley Associates continued to expand its operations, the company realized it needed to replace its two aging telecommunications systems.

***"Both systems had outlived their lifespan, so we were concerned with being able to support our phone operations,"*** said Bob Buckley, Director of IT for Buckley Associates. ***"The systems were also inefficient when it came to adding users or making changes. We usually had to bring-in our outside telecommunications support firm to add new equipment because it was a stand-alone system, and our IT staff does not interact with phone technology on a daily basis."***

Buckley Associates thus began searching for a modern telecommunications system that would integrate with its existing IT data network built on a Cisco infrastructure. ***"We also wanted a system we could centrally manage from our headquarters and that relied on IP (Internet Protocol) to communicate,"*** Buckley said. ***"This would make it possible to share the same infrastructure as our data infrastructure, and it would make it feasible for our IT team to support the system."***

More importantly, Buckley Associates also realized that such a system would also improve employee communications by enabling three-digit internal calls from any company location. The system Buckley Associates envisioned would also improve its ability to service customers by routing phone calls to the correct person more quickly.

### THE SOLUTION

The Buckley Associates IT staff handles the deployment and ongoing support of computer systems internally but realized it would need the help of an outside partner when it came to deploying a new telecommunications solution. ***"We knew what we wanted, which was a Cisco solution,"*** Buckley said. ***"But much like when someone builds a house, it's important with technology of this complexity to work with an architect that has the expertise to design and build a properly-working solution."***

After considering Avaya and Nortel solutions, Buckley chose a Cisco Unified Telecommunications solution because of how proficient Cisco products are when it comes to VoIP as well as data. Buckley Associates also had already deployed a Cisco Frame Relay data network, so working with Cisco on the voice component would make it possible to take advantage of the infrastructure already in place. ***"This would allow us to route data and voice over the same infrastructure,"*** Buckley said.

### Key Benefits - Covisia Cisco Unified Telecommunications Solution

- Improved customer service: phone calls routed faster to the correct person.
- Enhanced employee communications: three-digit internal dialing quickly connects employees from multiple locations across five states.
- Phone call tracking capability: management can assess how well the company handles customer calls.

From there, Buckley Associates needed to choose a solutions provider to deploy the solution.

***"We first worked with an integrator that proposed a viable solution, but instead of a centralized system, they recommended two systems that were not integrated, one for headquarters and one for our remote sites," Buckley said. "We weren't happy with that design because we wanted one system that all of our employees could use and stay connected as though they all work in the same office – whether at headquarters or at a remote location. We also wanted to manage the system centrally so it would be easy to add users."***

Buckley Associates needed a Cisco systems integrator that could come up with the proper solution design to meet the capabilities required by the company. They found the answer in Covisia. ***"We ultimately chose Covisia because of their ability to design a centrally-managed solution at a reasonable cost," Buckley said. "We told them what we wanted, and they designed the solution exactly to our requirements. The Covisia integration team also established a good rapport with us."***

Another critical factor that prompted Buckley Associates to partner with Covisia was Covisia's ability to support sites throughout the northeast region. Buckley Associates needed on-site deployment and support at all of its locations in New England as well as in New York.

Covisia designed and deployed a Cisco Unified Communications solution that also included Cisco Call Manager, Cisco Unity Voice Mail and Cisco 2800 routers at the remote company offices. Once those were completed, Covisia deployed the solution at the headquarters location.

End-user training, a process with which Covisia assisted but that Buckley Associates primarily managed, was a major component of the solution since the system was new to users. The training involved as many as 65 people at headquarters while the number of personnel at the remote offices ranged from 2-30. ***"By providing training upfront, the cutover was seamless," Buckley said. "Making end-users comfortable was critical to the smooth transition."***

During the installation at each office, Covisia deployed a series of upgrades including cabling, firewalls and routers to give Buckley Associates the latest in infrastructure technology. Covisia also demonstrated the ability to adapt when necessary such as the case with office in Maine. ***"All of our other sites are connected with a Frame Relay network with dedicated bandwidth," Buckley said. "But it would have been too costly to do this in Maine since it's a location with just two employees."***

Covisia helped Buckley Associates address this issue by utilizing a high-speed connection provided by the local cable company. ***"It's not a dedicated line, but it connects through our firewall via a VPN to keep our network secure," Buckley said. "This was a tricky configuration involving a lot of hurdles that Covisia helped us clear."***

## THE BENEFITS

***"Covisia was organized and communicated well with us so we both understood what each other needed to do," Buckley said. "This helped the project stay on track."***

From the deployment of the Cisco Unified Communications solution, Buckley said the main benefit is the ease of interoffice communication. ***"Everyone from across New England and New York is on same system, which improves our internal communications and helps make everyone, especially the people in our remote offices, feel more like part of the team," Buckley said. "All employees can dial everyone else by using three-digit extension. This keeps business processes more in sync."***

The improved communications system has also led to an even more important benefit: improved customer service. ***"We now handle calls from our customers better because the Cisco solution routes calls much more efficiently," Buckley said. "When a customer calls, they can access who they want faster, which means we address their needs faster. That leads to satisfied customers who are more apt to continue doing business with us."***

Looking ahead, Buckley Associates may take advantage of Cisco's unified messaging and mobility capabilities so that more users can work from home. ***"It's a big advantage having a solution from Cisco that lets you take advantage of today's technology but also puts you in position to take advantage of other technologies down the road," Buckley said.***

## In Summary

Now that the Cisco Unified Communications solution is deployed, the technology is simple enough that Buckley Associates can maintain phone and voice mail operations on a day-to-day basis. The company also tracks how well the system is working to ensure internal and external communications run smoothly.

***"Having Covisia help us get the system up-and-running was critical because the technology was beyond our comfort level," Buckley said. "We would have been outside our element, and we can't afford to invest all the time it takes to understand how the technology works. Covisia has the experience and client base that proves they are able to deploy and support this type of solution."***

In assessing the value of the solution designed and deployed by Covisia, Buckley said, ***"In terms of ROI, we see the value in ways such as improved customer service and easier interaction among our employees. These types of improvements ultimately help our business sustain itself over the long run."***

