

French Company Improves Innovation to Destroy Toxic Waste

Europlasma depends on Cisco solutions to save money and build a more collaborative, secure company.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>EUROPLASMA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry: Manufacturing • Location: Bruges, France • Number of Employees: 50 headquarters employees
<p>CHALLENGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve employee collaboration and accessibility • Control costs • Safeguard company business information
<p>RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced employee mobility and collaboration • Money saved on regular communications expenses
<p>SOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisco Smart Business Communications System provides support for high-quality voice communication, secure wireless mobile applications, and ability to meet government security requirements.

Challenge

For more than 15 years, Europlasma has been dedicated to developing innovative solutions to benefit the environment. Europlasma is internationally recognized as a leader in hazardous waste treatment, as well as renewable energy production. Based in France, the company uses technology to remove asbestos from the environment and produce clean energy while destroying toxic waste.

“Asbestos fiber is very dangerous, and today most asbestos is going into landfills everywhere in the world,” says Didier Pineau, chairman and chief executive officer of Europlasma. “Europlasma collects asbestos from sites throughout Europe, by dismantling buildings and ships. We then process this asbestos in our furnace at temperatures between 1600 and 1800 degrees Celsius. The material that we recover at the end of the process can be used for road construction and other projects.”

Europlasma is a very collaborative and dynamic company, and employees work closely together to exchange information, create new ideas, and make decisions. However, productivity began to suffer when

customers and colleagues had trouble reaching employees outside the office.

“Our phone system was causing us problems, because employees might have to call three or four times before they could reach a colleague who was away from their desk,” says Pineau. “Too often, our employees were wasting time trying to find one another, instead of solving business issues.”

Online collaboration is important as well, because Europlasma interacts with a global network of customers and business partners. Pineau and his team were concerned that an unreliable data network could create serious issues for the entire organization.

“In our system, when we are not dealing with local customers we are dealing with the whole world,” says Pineau. “So for us to have no Internet access is just deadly to our business.”

To support its collaborative workplace, Europlasma needed a voice and data communications solution that would be dependable and easy to manage, without affecting its bottom line. The solution would need to offer intelligent phone features to support a workforce that was constantly in motion, and provide robust security to protect sensitive business information.

Results

Europlasma replaced its aging voice and data communications with a new solution based on the Cisco® Smart Business Communications System. The Cisco solution lets the company integrate all of its voice, data, video, and wireless communications on one easy-to-manage platform. Working closely with IMP Industries, a Cisco Certified Partner, Europlasma took advantage of flexible financing to upgrade its communications without a large initial investment.

“We were able to obtain a thirty-six-month, zero-interest lease from Cisco Capital,” says Cedric Simonneau, technical engineer for IMP Industries. “This finance option helped Europlasma dramatically reduce its up-front expenses.”

“The zero percent lease was important not only because of the cash savings, but also because it showed that Cisco was serious about providing solutions for the small business market,” adds Pineau.

Europlasma quickly began saving 400 Euros a month on its domestic phone bill, because all of the company’s voice and data traffic runs over a single network. “The Cisco solution lets Europlasma integrate its network equipment as well as its communications costs,” says Simonneau. “Costs are not only less expensive, but more predictable. In fact, monthly communications bills for voice and data are less than Europlasma used to pay for data alone.”

With its new network solution, Europlasma has become a more productive, collaborative company. For example, the intelligent Cisco IP phone system enables employees to quickly reach one another anywhere on the company’s campus. Dialing a single extension number makes it easy to reach staff at their office phone or on a Cisco wireless IP phone. “Mobility is very important to our organization,” says Pineau. “Our Cisco wireless phones let our employees to move around from office to office, or to a storage room, yet still stay connected to customers and associates.”

The company’s secure wireless network also makes it easier for employees and business partners to get together on the spur of the moment to share information. “With the Cisco solution, employees can move around the office and share information on a laptop, instead of crowding around a desktop PC in someone’s office,” says Simonneau.

“Wireless guest access is especially helpful if a subcontractor visits our office and needs to share an online document with us,” adds Pineau. “Enabling them to securely connect to the network makes that very easy. Wireless guest access is also useful for our monthly Board of Director meetings. We have participants from all over the world, and the Cisco solution lets them check their email or access the Internet during meetings.”

Solution

Europlasma teamed with IMP Industries because of the company’s focus on solutions for growing businesses. “We have been working with small businesses for twenty-five years, so we are familiar with their needs,” says Simonneau. “We stay up to date on the latest technology, so our customers only have to focus on their business issues.”

After a thorough discussion of Europlasma’s business processes, IMP Industries designed a complete voice and data network solution built around the Cisco Unified Communications 500 Series for Small Business. The upgrade process was smooth, and the new solution was up and running in short order.

“To be honest, I was quite surprised at how quickly the transition went,” says Pineau. “We were expecting a long tune-up process, but IMP Industries was able to set the system up in about a day.”

To extend secure network access to employees throughout the Europlasma offices, the company installed Cisco Aironet® 1200 Series Wireless Access Points. “We chose Cisco Aironet Series Access Points because of their reliability to support critical business processes, and because Europlasma are using wireless data and telephony,” says Simonneau. “Telephony is a sensitive application that requires a high level of quality of service (QoS). Cisco Aironet delivered all the QoS that we needed, in a simple solution that was easy to configure.”

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– Cedric Simonneau, Technical Engineer, IMP Industries

Security was an important priority as well because Europlasma needed to protect its business data from unauthorized users. “Our Board requires us to safeguard all of our business information, and make sure that people access that data securely,” says Pineau. “Our Cisco solution is very important to us because it lets us deliver that high level of security.”

The Cisco Unified Communications 500 Series includes built-in support for virtual private networks (VPNs), encrypting data so that remote users can access the company network with minimal risk. “The VPN solution that employees use from home, or anywhere in the world, is really quite simple,” says Simonneau. “Employees simply double-click, enter the password, and they can securely access the Europlasma network.”

To keep the solution running at its best, Europlasma is protected by the Cisco SMARTnet[®] Service offering. Cisco SMARTnet offers around-the-clock access to Cisco technical experts, access to extensive tools and resources, and hardware replacement options.

“For Europlasma, SMARTnet is more than simply a recommendation: it’s a critical part of their business,” says Simonneau.

Together, Europlasma, IMP Industries, and Cisco have forged a powerful business partnership that sets the stage for continued innovation well into the future.

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco solution, visit <http://www.cisco.com/smallbusiness> or contact your authorized Cisco salesperson.



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