

Improving Account Manager Productivity At Cisco Systems, Inc.



A Case Study in Enhancing a Best-of-Breed
eSales Application Through Addition of Bi-directional
Data Synchronization Capabilities for PDA Devices

A Synchrologic Customer Profile White Paper



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Project Background

Cisco Systems is the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet. One hundred sixty million Internet users worldwide rely on Cisco equipment. Since shipping its first product in 1986, the company has grown into a global market leader that holds No. 1 or No. 2 market share in virtually every market segment in which it participates, with \$13.4 billion in revenue and more than 23,000 employees.

In North America, Cisco Systems maintains its growth and leadership through a distributed field sales organization. They need mobility and timely, accurate information to keep pace in today's competitive internet economy. To that end, Cisco deploys best-of-breed eSales applications to reduce administrative burden and increase productivity for the Field Sales organization.

An increasingly mobile work force has ever-growing demands: they need ready access to information, rapid data transfer, and fast action to meet client requirements. Cisco sales representatives were turning to handheld computers, or Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), to respond to those demands.

"Our initial field evaluation suggested that over 50% of our sales force were using some type of PDA to store contact information, a trend we believed would only continue to increase," noted Nora Sandoval, Cisco's Manager of Americas Sales Productivity. "To help eliminate duplicate data entry into disparate eSales tools and further increase sales productivity, support for PDA devices will become a necessity."

Synchronizing data between the PDA device and the eSales database was neither automated nor bi-directional. It required a series of imports in order to update contacts and accounts, an effort not only time consuming but non-productive.

Solution Overview

To help the sales force move contact management data between the PDA device and the eSales database, Cisco engaged the highly regarded Windward Group, now part of Vanteon. Vanteon specializes in hardware and software integration on mobile computing platforms, and was known for helping to bring a number of breakthrough products to market.

Cisco charged Vanteon with building a custom contact management application that would run on PDA devices. Synchronization with the eSales database was a critical component of the project. Guided by Vanteon's expertise, Cisco established their synchronization criteria: ease-of-use, reliability, performance, and extendibility. The networking giant then did a thorough analysis, evaluating a range of data synchronization solutions. They chose iMobile Data Synchronization, part of Synchrologic's iMobile Suite.

"After an exhaustive evaluation of the leading vendors of device synchronization, we chose Synchrologic," said Ed Hoy, Manager, Sales IT. "Having an application and database-independent, scalable solution was important to us. We saw the value in making customer contact data accessible through a PDA device. iMobile Data Synchronization has met the challenge and Synchrologic has been a responsive vendor during and after our integration project."

Solution Features

Several key features were required of the solution which Cisco would implement. iMobile Data Synchronization allowed Cisco to:

- Have instant access to select eSales data on PDA devices
- Keep business and personal address books separate on the devices
- Perform bi-directional synchronization
- Resolve synchronization conflicts easily
- Synchronize with the desktop and server databases
- Show contacts linked to corresponding accounts on their PDA device
- Perform PDA updates at the record level
- Store change history in meta-data for superior reporting and error recovery
- Support the needed change capture mechanisms on the devices
- Expand capabilities as needs evolve

Solution Benefits

The company that powers the Internet chose Synchrologic's iMobile Data Synchronization to augment their best-of-breed eSales applications with enhanced PDA access.

The chosen solution offered a variety of benefits.

Rapid Deployment

Because iMobile Data Synchronization offered advanced out-of-box functionality and a simple integration process, success followed quickly on the heels of Cisco's initial evaluation. In less than ten weeks, Cisco made its selection and Vanteon developed the PDA-based contact management application, integrated Synchrologic's software, and delivered the final product. Account managers were able to benefit from iMobile Data Synchronization almost immediately.

Improved Productivity

iMobile Data Synchronization provided easy and fast contact data synchronization -- helping account managers recover time they could use for selling. By reducing the administrative burden of moving data between devices and eliminating redundant data entry, the sales team would have access to up-to-the-minute customer data.

"The ability for iMobile Data Synchronization to return valuable selling time to Cisco Account Managers by reducing redundant data entry across disparate eSales applications is the kind of productivity solution we value."

*Denis Maynard
Cisco
Director of Sales Operations*

Solution Benefits

Simplified End-User Experience

iMobile Data Synchronization's seamless integration and ease-of-use meant Cisco account managers had no additional administrative work to do. PDA users could download the application from the server and use it immediately. Because synchronization required no more effort than the standard PDA sync, inconvenient imports and exports were history. To the end user, the process was simple.

In the background, contact management data was synchronized bi-directionally between the PDA and the eSales database. Any new information remained on the PC, staged and ready for later synchronization with the company server. Since server connections were not always available to PDA users, this feature was critical for expediting data transfer.

Room to Grow

Increasing mobility means increasing need for synchronization. By the year 2000, the percentage of account managers working with PDA devices had grown to over 65%. Cisco licensed iMobile Data Synchronization to service over 1000 Field Sales personnel worldwide. Cisco expects not only increased penetration of PDAs within the sales force, but also growing demand for information and functionality.

"Today the Field Sales organization needs PDA to eSales application synchronization," said Nora Sandoval. "In the future they will require wireless and other mobile device synchronization to connect with eSales applications. Based on our initial engagement with Synchrologic we believe they would be equally capable of managing future projects in this domain."

Summary

By "Empowering the Internet Generation,"SM Cisco Systems built their business on helping others move information. Cisco was committed to making critical contact and account information available anytime, anywhere their account managers needed it. Synchrologic helped Cisco keep that commitment.

The bottom line was this: with iMobile Data Synchronization, Cisco improved its ability to capture and maintain critical customer data on both a PDA device and its eSales database. iMobile Data Synchronization extended data from Cisco's best-of-breed eSales applications to a PDA platform easily and efficiently. With no additional work, the sales force was able to synchronize devices, yielding improved productivity.

Feedback from end-users indicate that having contact data synchronized between their PDA and PC-based eSales applications gives them more flexibility and time to better manage their business. Solutions such as this bring significant productivity wins to the Americas Sales Organization and to Cisco.

About Synchronologic

Synchronologic, the leader in synchronizing Business Data Anywhere, offers the most comprehensive mobile and wireless enterprise infrastructure software, thus providing the essential synchronization platform required for managing mobile devices and enabling anywhere access to vital business data and applications.

Synchronologic's iMobile Suite provides a secure, Internet-based infrastructure solution for supporting mobile and wireless devices used by employees, customers, partners and suppliers. Smart phones, Pocket PCs, Palm devices, PCs, e-mail pagers and laptops all connect to the iMobile Suite server via wireline or wireless Internet, dial-up or Local Area Network. iMobile Suite manages the devices, keeping them updated with the latest application data, e-mail, files and software.

Synchronologic has a five year track record of successfully supporting the most complex and demanding mobile and wireless computing applications. Our depth of experience allow us to understand your business challenges and opportunities, and provide the essential synchronization platform you need to address them. At the same time, our solutions hide the complexity inherent in a mobile and wireless network, making management and support deceptively simple.

Users are more productive with vital personalized information effortlessly available anywhere, anytime, on any device. Your IT organization is able to easily, securely, reliably, and cost-effectively support users with a comprehensive infrastructure solution.

We understand enterprise mobile and wireless issues and have built a strong track record of successfully addressing them in partnership with our clients.



200 North Point Center East
Alpharetta, GA 30022
1-888-345-SYNC
www.synchronologic.com
info@synchronologic.com