



Cisco No Longer Purely a Network Company

Industry leader diversifies into products for contact centers

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Take

When most people think of Cisco Systems, they think of networks and in recent times especially of the Voice over the Internet Protocol (VoIP). Cisco continues to dominate this market, but at the same time it has used this experience to develop products that support call center operations. Initially these products largely addressed voice-based call management and the routing of calls to specific agents. Their natural extension is to support other forms of communication such as e-mail, the Web, chat and video, which now provide the more broadly named contact centers with the ability to offer integrated, multiple choices for customer communications.

And Cisco didn't stop there. Having acquired Metreos and Audium in June of 2006, the company now offers a speech-based interactive voice response (IVR) product that runs over VoIP. It is easy to set up and comes with a user-friendly graphical tool set that makes maintaining menu structures intuitive. But Cisco's biggest departure from old-style networking comes through partnership with eLoyalty. Jointly they now offer a unique business intelligence (BI) solution that not only analyzes the content of recorded calls but combines the analyses with behavioral analytics to enhance customer profiling.

With this wider portfolio of products, Cisco is now a major provider of contact center products; the biggest challenge will be to persuade potential customers that they need to change the way they run their centers and that these products truly support the operational changes required to make centers more efficient and effective.

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