The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

LOCATION:
Chicago, IL, US

ORGANIZATION:
Underwriters Laboratories

YEAR:
2011

ORGANIZATION URL:
http://www.ul.com/global/eng/pages/

STATUS:
Laureate

PROJECT NAME:
Underwriters Laboratories

CATEGORY:
Safety & Security

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Underwriters Laboratories (UL) is a global testing and certification organization recognized globally as the standard in product safety. Each year, more than 20 billion UL marks appear on products from 72,000 manufacturers in 98 countries. UL has been certifying product safety and assessing compliance for more than 115 years, and has continued to expand its capabilities, expertise and overall scope of service offerings through acquisitions and partnerships. Such expansive growth left the company with a varied mixture of inefficient and aging technologies as well as disjointed business processes. Particularly for UL's business – which relies on seamless collaboration between employees in order to maintain a thriving testing and certification business – it is critical that the communications systems between employees are fast, efficient and designed with productivity in mind. Working with HP, UL has embarked on a multi-year transformation to standardize its processes and technologies, while unleashing the talents and productivity of each employee. Christian Anschuetz, CIO, created a vision of how UL could benefit from leveraging a global Unified Communications & Collaboration infrastructure dubbing it the "Virtual Workplace." Working with Tom Boxrud, director of enterprise infrastructure, HP conducted a series of workshops to align Christian's vision and UL's goals -- defining a three-phase roadmap to provide a globally Unified Enterprise. The HP Services team is installing the UL Virtual Workplace configuration on the desktop of every employee in North America to connect each employee to the company's new Unified Communications and Collaboration (UC&C) infrastructure. Employees can now collaborate with each other and customers without regard to medium, location or device. The HP team installed UL's next generation UC&C LAN infrastructure, leveraging cost-effective and reliable HP networking technology A-Series; A12500 and A5500 switches and E-Series; E5400 and E8200 switches as well as providing 100% Wireless LAN coverage with the E-MSM760 Wireless LAN controllers and E-MSM422 Wireless LAN access points. All working in concert to support business grade Voice over IP (VoIP) and converged communications. UL also replaced 23 private branch exchange (PBX) systems with a single centralized solution for

voice communications leveraging Avaya Aura architecture. The solution streamlines IT management with standardized desktop configurations for employees supported on a common network infrastructure. This enables UL to offer faster, higher quality and more customer-friendly services, which in turn allows manufacturers to accelerate the product life cycle – from research to manufacturing to recycling. The installation of these new technologies and a UC&C platform is bridging the gap between business information and customer communications and streamlining information flows for improved management and decision-making.

SOCIETAL BENEFITS

As UL employees collaborate more effectively with each other and their customers, they enhance the quality, speed and volume of their services. By increasing service capacity, UL continues to grow its public safety mission and advance as a global company—bringing safer products to market faster everywhere in the world.

PROJECT BENEFIT EXAMPLE

The changes UL is making affect every person in the organization. HP's team has created, articulated and demonstrated an infrastructure that is helping shape UL as a truly global company and help manufacturers bring safer products to market faster. The proliferation of technologies, devices and communication types across UL's enterprise was hindering employee collaboration and increasing operations costs by slowing decision-making and diverting valuable IT resources. Since HP has delivered the new UC&C solution, answers have been found for these tough – yet all-too-common – challenges. UL business benefits include: • Ability to adapt business processes and expertise to serve global markets; • Fully leveraging 68 lab, testing and certification facilities in 102 countries; • Enhanced and accelerated employee-customer collaboration; and • Equipped to integrate services with all phases of customer operations. As a result of HP's UC&C solution, UL can rely on real-time, integrated knowledge exchange among employees, partners and customers that increases overall business productivity. For example, UL replaced 23 private branch exchange (PBX) systems with a single centralized solution for voice communications. The solution streamlines IT management with standardized desktop configurations for employees supported on a common network infrastructure. This enables UL to offer faster, higher quality and more customer-friendly services, which in turn allows manufacturers to accelerate the product life cycle – from research to manufacturing to recycling.

IS THIS PROJECT AN INNOVATION, BEST PRACTICE? Yes