Bob Evans Farms

Major restaurant and retail food company partners with Logicalis to deploy advanced communication and collaboration capabilities

Corporate Move Creates Opportunity to Deploy Advanced Technologies
Bob Evans Farms, Inc. (NASDAQ: BOBE) is a $1.7 billion restaurant and retail food products company that employs approximately 30,000 people. Under the Bob Evans Restaurants brand name, the company owns nearly 600 family restaurants in 19 states—primarily in the Midwest, mid-Atlantic and Southeast United States. The company also produces and distributes a variety of refrigerated and frozen convenience food items under the Bob Evans and Owens brand names that are shipped to all 50 states as well as parts of Canada and Mexico. In addition to the company headquarters in Ohio, the company operates four food processing plants.

As Bob Evans Farms planned to move its corporate headquarters from Columbus to New Albany, Ohio, George Haller—the vice president of IT infrastructure and operations services—determined it was the perfect time to refresh an aging Avaya communication platform. "In addition to a hardware refresh, we also wanted to enhance our collaboration and mobility capabilities, particularly when communicating with our restaurants and personnel at our four food processing plants," Haller says.

Specific collaboration and communication capabilities Haller hoped to gain included instant messaging and single-number dialing as well as unified messaging so voicemail messages would also appear in email accounts. Haller also considered new wireless access technology to replace an existing Motorola solution.

"We needed to improve the coverage and reliability throughout our buildings, and we were interested in multi-tier Wi-Fi access that would accommodate visitors as well as employees who bring their own devices to work," Haller explains. "We also wanted to provide direct connections to the internal network for those with domain memberships. With our previous solution, everyone had to connect to a public Wi-Fi and then use a virtual private network to access our applications."

Logicalis Creates Vision for Achieving Required Objectives
Haller considered new technologies from Avaya but also turned to Logicalis, an IT solution partner that had consistently provided strong services and support for Bob Evans Farms across a wide range of technologies. Haller was particularly interested in finding out about the capabilities his company could gain from Cisco, one of the technology providers with which Logicalis has forged a strong working relationship.

"Logicalis provided us with a vision and comprehensive plan for how Cisco technologies could help us achieve our communication and collaboration objectives," Haller says. "We were also impressed with the Logicalis implementation services as well as their on-going Cisco support programs."

Cisco Demo Secures Executive Endorsement and Aligns Entire Company
Another key factor in choosing the Logicalis-Cisco combination was the arrangement made by Logicalis to bring Bob Evans Farms executives and department managers to the Cisco demo center in Ohio. This allowed the team to see the capabilities offered by Cisco technologies in action.

"The demo center helped us establish in our own minds exactly what was possible with the new Cisco technologies," Haller says. "About 25 people from the company visited the demo center, and the impressions they came away with gave us momentum in believing in the new collaboration capabilities. Once we saw what was possible, our entire team bought into the new technology platform, which helped us align everyone in the company with what we could achieve."

Haller is also impressed with how well Logicalis and Cisco collaborate in delivering customer solutions. "Working with Logicalis and Cisco is like working with one company," Haller says. "They work so well together that it's hard to distinguish between the two during our interactions. Logicalis knows how to articulate the value of the Cisco vision and has the ability to procure the necessary Cisco resources to deliver on that vision."

To address the Bob Evans Farms telecommunications, collaboration and wireless requirements, Logicalis designed and deployed a solution consisting of several Cisco components: Unified Communications Manager and Unified Contact Center Express as well as wireless controllers and access points. Logicalis also implemented Cisco Identity Services Engine (ISE), a policy-management and control platform for wireless devices that supports and secures bring-your-own-device, guest-access and tiered-access environments.

Logicalis Approach Streamlines Transition
Logicalis also demonstrated its ability to blend the strengths of Cisco components with other technologies, such as providing a Blue Jeans Network videoconferencing solution. "This made sense for us from a cost standpoint because we currently rely on just a handful of video devices," Haller says. "We like the Blue Jeans pay-as-you-go business model, and we can now establish a pattern of usage to determine if we need to invest more heavily in videoconferencing."

Before the move, Logicalis set up the solution for the Bob Evans Farms IT team and five call center agents in the previous headquarters so the company could start assimilating the new technology ahead of time. Logicalis also trained the IT team on how to use the new Cisco technologies, including the handsets, voice mail and Wi-Fi. The IT team then trained the rest of the company.

"Everyone quickly picked up how to use the new capabilities like instant messaging and viewing voice mails within their email accounts," Haller says. "We rolled over to the new voice and wireless access solutions with very little outage time and no IT service desk downtime."

Wireless Capabilities Justify Platform Change
As for the wireless access components, Haller was reluctant at first to migrate to the Cisco platform since all the Bob Evans Restaurants rely on Motorola. The company prefers to keep its technology footprint as simple as possible.

"But the tiering capabilities of Cisco ISE and its synergies with Wi-Fi convinced us to go with Cisco for our corporate office and our processing plants," Haller explains. "When the restaurants are due for a wireless refresh, we may convert them to a Cisco Meraki wireless solution as well."

Logicalis also designed and deployed business continuity capabilities at an offsite data center for the telecommunications systems. If a disaster strikes the main headquarters, Bob Evans Farms can still maintain phone communications across the entire company.

New Capabilities Increase Employee Productivity
Haller says that end users particularly benefit from the Jabber instant messaging capabilities. "With Jabber integrated with Microsoft Exchange, employees can see if someone they need to collaborate with is online," Haller says. "This is very helpful for users who are not in the same building. And for those who spend a lot of time in meetings, they can still communicate without having to interrupt the meetings and place phone calls."

End users also appreciate how the person-to-person videoconferencing improves their ability to work on projects together and the ability to check voice mail right from their PC. The less they have to change devices to interact, the more productively they can work. The wireless access points also allow the staff to take their laptops into flexible workspace areas—such as the outdoor patio and a deck by a nearby pond—so they don't have to be tied down to their office or cube.

"This makes for a better work environment," Haller adds. "It's also prompted us to start converting to lighter laptops so it's even easier for people to move around. With the Logicalis solution, we have achieved new levels of collaboration and mobility that allow our staff to access our systems wherever they are and however they want to work. And because it's now easier to communicate, work gets done more efficiently."

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> **George Haller, Vice President of IT Infrastructure and Operations Services, Bob Evans Farms, Inc.**