



## Solution Overview

# Cisco Smart Business Roadmap—Operational Efficiency

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Successful businesses are constantly striving to improve their competitive advantage by increasing the efficiency of their operations. The Cisco® Smart Business Roadmap helps organizations become more efficient by bringing business planning and technology planning together to address near- and long-term business goals.

*The Cisco Smart Business Roadmap Helps Small and Medium-Sized Businesses Improve Operational Efficiency Through Technology*

## CHALLENGE

The pace of business change continues to accelerate. As businesses strive to become more agile in a competitive climate, companies face the ever-present challenge of maintaining operational efficiency. For example:

- Companies must use their existing resources more productively and improve the quality of their products and services. Gains in sales volume and customer base will only benefit the profit line if operational efficiency is prioritized.
- Customers are becoming more demanding and require a variety of ways to communicate and obtain information. These communications channels must be provided in a cost-effective manner.
- While technology can help address many of today's business challenges, it is also becoming more complex. This complexity must be managed and minimized.

## CISCO SMART BUSINESS ROADMAP

Businesses need technology that is simpler to deploy and manage, supports their critical business challenges, and meets their needs today and in the future. The Cisco Smart Business Roadmap helps customers prioritize their business challenges and align them with a flexible network technology plan to achieve their business goals. The roadmap shows how organizations can use Cisco technology solutions to optimize operational efficiency by effectively addressing current challenges and evolving to meet new ones.

Through research and interaction with small- and mid-sized-business (SMB) customers, Cisco Systems® has identified three major phases of business and technology evolution: foundation, growth, and optimized. No two companies are identical in their current needs or plans for the future. It is not uncommon for a company to be in multiple phases at the same time. These phases are just guidelines for planning and provide instruction to implement technology in an incremental and structured way that will optimize the business.

### Foundation

Businesses in the foundation phase (Figure 1) are seeking to communicate more effectively within their company. They may want to provide employees and customers with easier access to information by using e-mail or the Web. They may need to improve interdepartmental information sharing with e-mail, scheduling systems, and other tools.

The following are typical operational-efficiency challenges encountered at the foundation phase:

- Lack of up-to-date information, which leads to poor or uninformed business decisions
- Lack of automated business processes, which causes shipment and reporting delays
- High error rates due to manual processing, which lead to lower productivity and efficiency

## **Growth**

Businesses in the growth phase (Figure 2) are looking beyond their core business processes for opportunities to become even more efficient. They are beginning to give workers the ability to work from home or from the road so they can respond to colleagues and customers more quickly. They also want to continue to improve communications with employees, customers, and suppliers and provide more immediate information sharing so they can be more efficient and cost-effective.

The following are typical operational-efficiency challenges encountered at the growth phase:

- Increased demand for effective communications, resulting in higher telecommunications overhead
- Increased volume of orders, requiring improved management systems
- The need to provide employees with remote access to information using any communications method or device

## **Optimized**

In the optimized phase (Figure 3), businesses are often focused on differentiating themselves through personalized interaction with customers and suppliers, and between employees. They may adopt new business applications to improve information sharing across the company and with customers and suppliers, and they need a technology platform that can support these advanced business tools.

The following are typical operational-efficiency challenges encountered at the optimized phase:

- Streamlining internal and external communications
- Optimizing employee collaboration and productivity
- Simplifying supply chain processes and supplier interactions

To keep pace with these challenges and ensure that their business operations remain efficient, businesses require a forward-looking technology plan—one that not only addresses current problems, but will also scale easily and cost-effectively as needs change. To implement this type of solution, they need a partner that can help them plan and control the evolution of their company, closely aligning technology to suit their business needs.

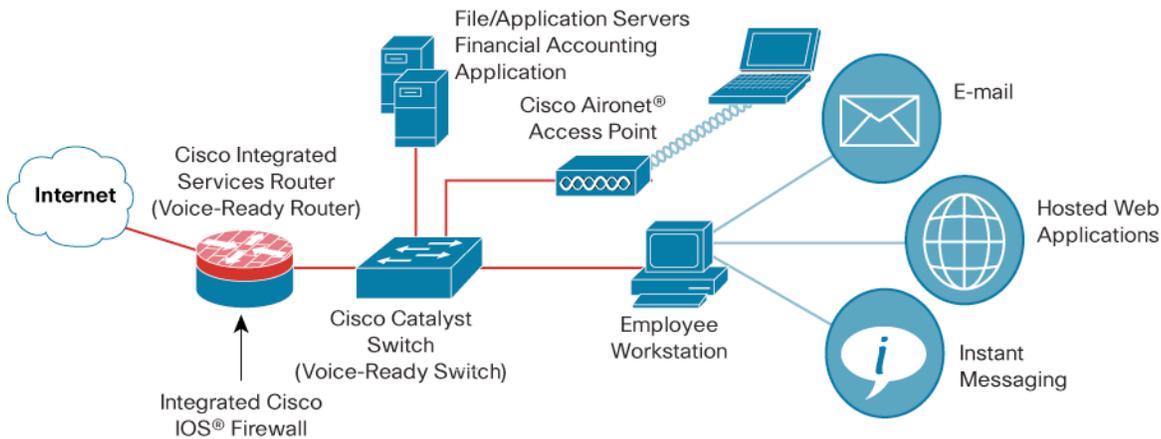
## **SOLUTION**

The Cisco Smart Business Roadmap provides a structured, planned evolution path to help businesses keep pace with change and make smart technology decisions. This roadmap shows how Cisco technology solutions can optimize business by effectively addressing current challenges and evolving to meet new ones. Each phase builds a base for the next phase, protects the business investment, and makes adoption of new technologies easier.

SMBs can work with their Cisco Specialized Partner to implement the Cisco Smart Business Roadmap over time in incremental steps, at the pace that is right for them.

## Foundation

Figure 1. Typical Foundation Phase Network to Improve Operational Efficiency

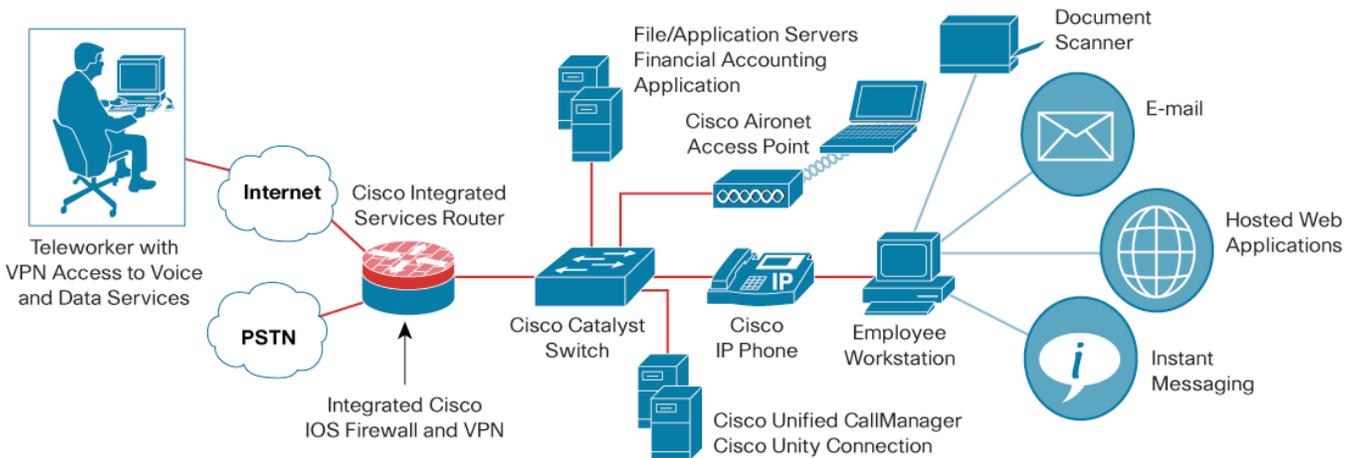


Improving the operational efficiency of a business is an ongoing process. Poor operational efficiency can slow access to critical business applications such as e-mail, financial accounting software, hosted Web applications, or instant messaging. Slow network and application performance can frustrate end users, negatively impact customer service, and inhibit growth. As part of the Cisco Smart Business Roadmap, the Cisco Secure Network Foundation overcomes these challenges by providing a robust platform for highly efficient operations.

- The Cisco Secure Network Foundation includes Cisco integrated services routers and Cisco Catalyst® switches, providing a flexible communications platform that serves as the cornerstone to the business evolution and as the foundation for other networking solutions. The Cisco Secure Network Foundation delivers integrated security and maximizes reliability, helping to ensure that data is protected and that applications function as promised.
- The Cisco integrated services routers support voice applications, positioning the business to integrate voice and data onto the same network for greater efficiency and cost savings.
- The Cisco integrated services routers and Cisco Catalyst switches provide a fast, secure, and reliable network foundation that helps enable connectivity to business applications, remote networks, and the Internet. Building a solid network foundation with these devices provides more control of network traffic, allowing you to tune your network according to business needs. Quick response times from core business applications allow your business to operate more efficiently.
- Security services are integrated into each Cisco integrated services router and Cisco Catalyst switch, supporting the implementation and enforcement of a comprehensive network security policy.

## Growth

Figure 2. Typical Growth Phase Network to Improve Operational Efficiency

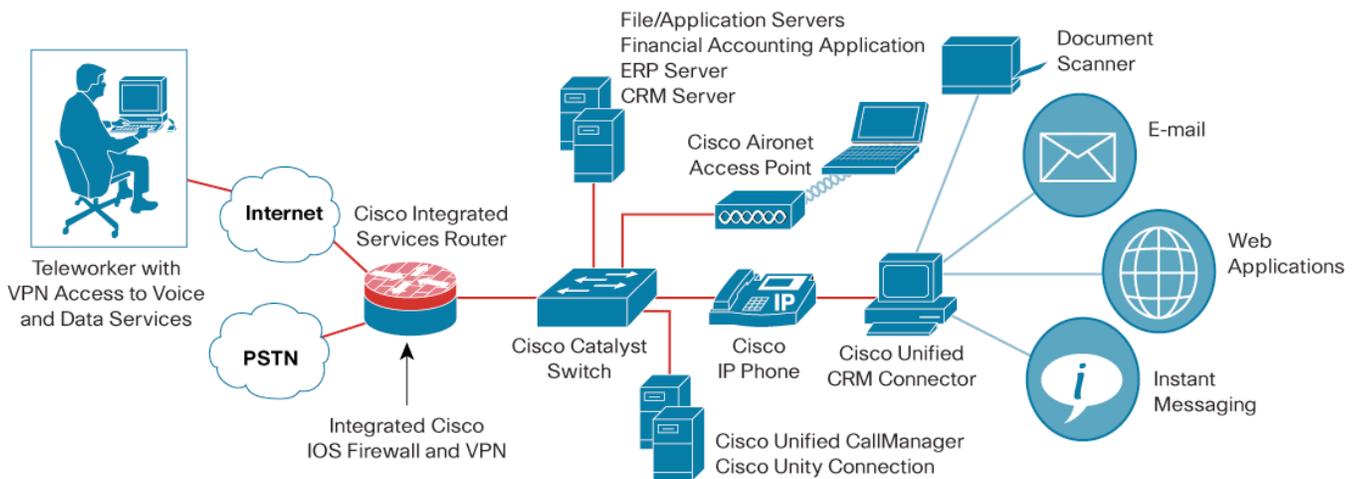


In many cases, the growth phase of improving operational efficiency involves improving employee access to business-critical data and information, using technology to help the business scale to meet increasing demands, and intelligently filing and archiving important documents.

- Cisco integrated services routers have embedded remote-user VPN capabilities that give mobile employees secure access to the mission-critical applications and data they need, from any location.
- Using Cisco Unified CallManager Express or Cisco Unified CallManager gives employees access to their company phone extension over a secure VPN connection. Using the Cisco IP Communicator application or Cisco Unified IP phones, employees can easily connect with each other by simply dialing a 4-digit extension or accessing the company directory. All toll charges are billed back to the company, eliminating the hassles of employee reimbursement for business calls.
- Archiving and storing paper documents electronically can greatly improve the operational efficiency of a business. Cisco integrated services routers and Catalyst switches provide reliable, secure, and fast network transport for electronic storage of digital documents and images.

## Optimized

Figure 3. Typical Optimized Phase Network to Improve Operational Efficiency



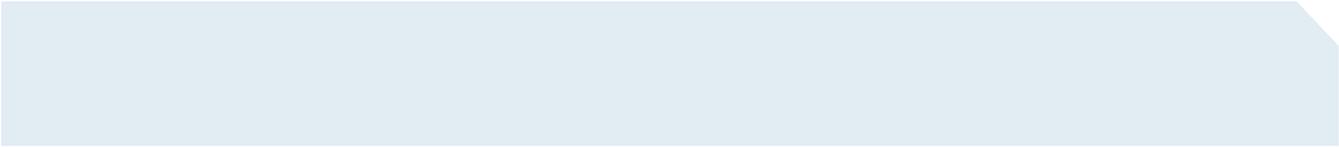
In the optimized phase, businesses often focus on differentiating themselves by optimizing interaction with customers and suppliers, and between employees. They consider implementing customer relationship management (CRM), sales force automation (SFA), and call center applications to improve information sharing across the company and with customers and suppliers. When optimized, technology is integrated into the fabric of the business to further enhance communication and responsiveness.

- Using the Cisco Unified CRM Connector to integrate the Cisco IP phones or the Cisco IP Communicator application with a company's CRM application provides employees with productivity-enhancing features that save valuable time.
- By integrating the CRM system with the Cisco Unified IP phone system, all call information is collected by the Cisco Unified CRM Connector and is inserted into the CRM application. This allows the management to make optimal decisions based on real metrics derived from customer contact information.
- The Cisco network prioritizes traffic to and from business applications, helping ensure that employees can access critical data when they need it, improving customer service and optimizing operational efficiency.

## BUSINESS BENEFITS

The Cisco Smart Business Roadmap helps organizations use technology to take advantage of today's business opportunities and maximize the long-term potential of their investments. With their business objectives prioritized and a technology plan mapped to meet these objectives, SMBs can cost-effectively improve communications, simplify business processes, and provide secure communications to employees, customers, and partners. The Cisco Smart Business Roadmap brings together tailored technology solutions, world-class service and support delivered through local specialized partners, and flexible financing options—all designed specifically for SMBs. The Cisco Smart Business Roadmap helps companies:

- Address challenges across all business locations
- Ensure that new technology solutions meet current business needs and are flexible enough to support rapid change and growth
- Become more efficient, with real-time information access and improved collaboration, communications, and business processes
- Implement technology over time in incremental steps, at a pace that meets business needs



Following are examples of potential operational-efficiency benefits at each phase:

### **Foundation**

- Employees have the right information at their fingertips at the right time so they can make better decisions faster
- Automating business processes reduces manual processing errors and frees up employees to focus on their strengths such as serving customers and closing sales
- A flexible network foundation protects infrastructure investments because companies can add new services using existing equipment.

### **Growth**

- Consolidation of disparate voice and data networks into a single network helps avoid toll charges and reduce overall telecommunications expenses.
- Access to business information from anywhere at any time means both mobile and in-house employees have the same access to the network and data, improving efficiency and job satisfaction.
- Integration of business systems results in faster and more accurate order processing and greater visibility into business trends and requirements.

### **Optimized**

- Unifying internal and external communication systems optimizes employee collaboration and boosts productivity.
- Online conferencing helps reduce travel costs while enabling more effective collaborate with customers and suppliers.
- Integrating business applications helps companies track compliance with regulatory requirements, as well as optimizing supply chain processes

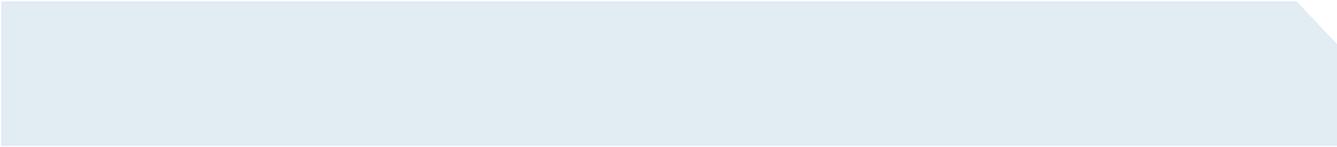
## **WHY CISCO**

Cisco Systems provides a complete solution that addresses the unique challenges faced by SMBs. Cisco offers a wide array of industry-tailored solutions and applications that are proven and tested to meet specific business needs. Acting as trusted advisors, Cisco and its partners work closely with customers to identify the state of their business and network and provide a solution that most closely aligns with their immediate requirements. The Cisco Smart Business Roadmap also provides a framework to help ensure that the immediate solution scales to optimize the business over time.

The Cisco Smart Business Roadmap provides networking solutions, services and support, and financing—as well as specialized local partners and service providers—to design and deliver the right solution that will evolve with individual business needs. Cisco offers a comprehensive solution in which the components work better together to produce optimal business results.

Cisco Systems Capital<sup>®</sup> financing and leasing options provide SMBs worldwide with innovative, flexible leasing and financing programs at competitive rates. SMBs have the flexibility to use revenue derived from enhanced network performance to pay for equipment.

Cisco specialized partners and service providers are experts in the technologies that support the Smart Business Roadmap, providing a high level of localized, in-depth expertise in solutions that can help your company move to the next level. To ensure that your network remains robust and supports critical business operations, service and support options such as Cisco SMB Support Assistant can help you maximize network availability.



Cisco understands that a better way of doing business begins at the business level—not the technology level. Cisco, its channel partners, and service providers work closely with businesses to help ensure that their network supports and optimizes the business. Companies can implement a networking technology solution over time in small, incremental steps, at the pace they choose, with lower risk and a lower total cost of ownership. For businesses that are seeking an alternative to purchasing and operating their equipment and services in-house, Cisco has global partnerships with proven service providers to deliver and manage these services. With this flexible roadmap approach, any business can take its first step toward meeting changing business needs today and in the years to come.

## **ABOUT CISCO**

Cisco Systems is the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet. Today, networks are an essential part of business, education, government, and home communications, and Cisco IP-based networking solutions are the foundation of these networks. Cisco hardware, software, and service offerings are used to create Internet solutions that allow individuals, companies, and countries to increase productivity, improve customer satisfaction, and strengthen competitive advantage. The Cisco name has become synonymous with the Internet, as well as with the productivity improvements that Internet business solutions provide. At Cisco, the vision is to change the way people work, live, play, and learn.

Cisco innovation continues with industry-leading products in the core areas of routing and switching, as well as advanced technologies in areas such as home networking, IP Communications, optical solutions, network security, storage networking, and wireless LAN technology.

Today, Cisco remains committed to creating secure networks that are smarter, faster, and more durable, with a generational approach to an evolutionary infrastructure.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

To learn more about the Cisco Smart Business Roadmap, visit <http://www.cisco.com/go/sbr> or contact your Cisco channel partner. For more information on finding a Cisco partner, visit <http://www.cisco.com/go/partnerlocator>.



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