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Collaboration

Clayco's dynamic collaboration culture leads modernization of construction industry

Webex Meetings established as collaboration platform of choice for leading US engineering and construction business. Cisco engagement enables Clayco to reimagine the workplace of the future.

Customer Summary

Customer name
Clayco

Industry
Engineering, Construction

Location
10 Locations in North America

Number of employees
2,600

Challenge

Consolidate nine separate conferencing platforms

Establish a unifying collaboration platform across the organization

Integrate 40+ mobile field construction sites into seamless collaboration

Solution

Webex Meetings enables users to schedule, run, and record meetings

Meraki strengthens wireless network in head office and remote worksites

Results

Standardizes workplace collaboration

Reduces travel with video experience and file sharing, and improves project management

Reduces demand on tech support

40+

remote project sites

60–70%

reduction in the amount of time it takes to make a decision
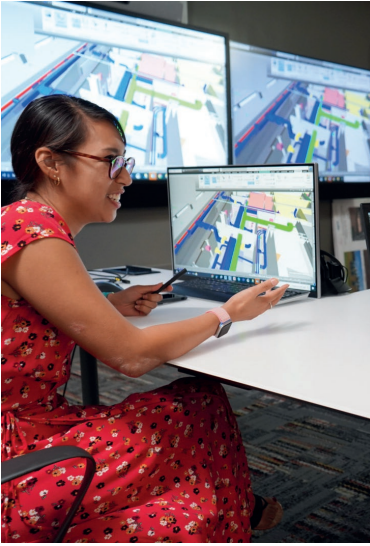
Reimagining collaborative working

With construction projects exceeding $4 billion, Clayco is one of North America's leading design and build companies. It provides a full-service, turnkey approach to real estate projects, integrating expertise in architecture, engineering, and construction.

Collaboration is central to how Clayco operates. The business needs to link its subject matter experts through every step of the project, whether they're in the head office, onsite or working remotely. Increasingly, clients and managers want to see a project's progress, not just be told about it.

"At Clayco, we create the design and building environments so our clients can realize their dreams," explains Russ Burns, President and CEO of Clayco. "To do that, we really get to the heart of what people want and that requires connection."

"Our business is constantly evolving. Webex provides the flexibility to really meet our needs as they continue to evolve."

—Russ Burns, President and CEO, Clayco

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Designing and building are very linear processes, but connection depends on real collaboration. "Meetings and collaboration are some of the most important things we do," says Todd Finders, CIO. "We talk to people, we converse, we make eye contact, and we make sure information is understood."

With multiple projects on the go, and multiple teams involved, the business found itself managing a diverse set of collaboration tools. This led to inconsistent performance, variable quality, and an environment that was unnecessarily hard to support.

Clayco recognized an opportunity to not just consolidate but modernize its entire approach to workplace collaboration. This would establish a consistent, seamless user experience, making it easier to schedule, start, and manage meetings. With both tech and data security becoming increasingly important in the construction sector, it would also strengthen Clayco's business continuity.

Fundamentally, it was important the business presented itself as a unified entity. "We want the same experience in the head office as at a project site or an employee's laptop at home," says Tomislav Zigo, Chief Technology Officer. "Clayco has consistently set new standards in this industry. How we communicate as a business is vital."

Resetting the use of collaboration tools

Webex Meetings is now established as Clayco's default meeting and collaboration platform. It consolidates the use of nine separate conferencing platforms and enables Clayco to remove some of the disparate and outdated technology lingering in the business.

The Cisco engagement also includes Meraki wireless access points, Cisco Unified Communications Manager, Expressway, and Unity Connection. Cisco Duo enhances secure access to Clayco's critical workplace applications for any user and device.

The solution was planned and delivered by World Wide Technology (WWT), one of Cisco's Global Strategic Partners, based in St. Louis with some 7,000 employees in more than 20 locations globally. WWT's work included assessing and upgrading the network infrastructure, designing a robust Meraki Wi-Fi network, planning specialized meeting rooms to share 3D renderings, and integrating Outlook, scheduling software and digital signage to enable easy scheduling of rooms, along with a host of adoption services.

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The project was more than a consolidation exercise, explains Amanda Sturgeon, Customer Success Manager at WWT, it was an opportunity to reset how Clayco engages with its communications tools: "This involved lots of training for Clayco staff, with a kick-off event for the head offices and on-demand training for remote staff. Our aim was to eliminate resistance and frustration and to help Clayco imagine the workplace of the future."

This included trips to WWT's tech campus in St. Louis to see Cisco technology in action and prove its utility ahead of roll-out.

The implementation was managed in phases, starting with the two head offices and concluding with the trailer offices on project sites.

"The project sites had previously found workarounds to challenging connectivity issues," says Matthew Shea, Lead Systems Engineer and Service Desk Supervisor, Clayco. "But once we explained the advantages of a unified approach – on support, productivity, consistency, they were onboard with the changes."

Establishing a unified workplace

The move to Webex by Cisco establishes, for the first time, a consistent user experience. "It is a key part of creating a unifying culture across the business," says Finders. "This is about how we present as a business, to clients and to prospective recruits."

Rather than an array of tools and a variety of processes, there is an agreed standard. Users now have the freedom to schedule, run, and record meetings, whether they're working from one of the 40-plus project offices onsite or from a conference room at one of the offices across the U.S. "For some important meetings we used to involve the service desk. Fifteen minutes before the meeting was due to start, the support guys would be checking that everything worked. With Webex, thankfully those days are behind us," Finders continues.

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A consistent toolset means simpler support, fewer upgrades to manage, and fewer tricky upgrades. Webex is interoperable with Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Google Meet, and integrates with the existing Polycom endpoints. Long term, Clayco has the assurance Webex will be able to incorporate new applications, such as augmented reality, creating an even greater immersive experience.

"It means we can continue to use Webex and customers can use a conference tool of their choice," says Shea. "We keep the freedom but strengthen the simplicity. And less need for day-to-day support means IT resources can be focused on new initiatives."

Better-quality video enables a better conference call experience. "There are more opportunities for eye contact, even if we're not in the same room," adds Shea.

It also contributes towards a reduced travel budget and more visible project management. Dispersed project teams can now see the progress of a project and it is quicker and easier to share the latest drawings and plans.

"Compared with past decades, we are seeing as much as a 60-70% reduction in the amount of time it takes to make decisions," Zigo explains. "Problems are resolved before construction begins and this helps our teams deliver projects faster, optimize costs, and better satisfy clients."

In person meetings continue to be a vital part of the mix, but Webex has paved the way for the next generation of collaborative working. And, if a call is missed, it is easier to share the audio, video, or transcript of the meeting.

"Webex allows groups to quickly meet and discuss roadblocks on construction projects," says David Molamphy, Senior Project Manager, Clayco. "We're now able to show pictures we took in the field and then quickly switch to the architect showing how they drew the situation. Webex has become a standard tool, so subcontractors and project owners are ready to jump into a meeting."

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—Todd Finders, CIO, Clayco

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Going forward

For Clayco, one of the biggest strategic challenges is to consistently lead and deliver as a modernizer of the construction industry. To do so it needs the right tools, the right talent, and the right mindset.

"Our business is constantly evolving," President and CEO, Burns, explains, "Webex provides the flexibility to really meet our needs as they continue to evolve."

Finders agrees Webex will play a central role in demonstrating how the business is changing. "We work with some of the world's leading technology companies. Our technology strategy reflects the need to be an innovative leader in the construction industry. We expect our workplace, job sites, and our approach to collaboration to become more immersive and even more intuitive than it is today."

Cisco Products:

Webex by Cisco
Cisco Duo
Cisco Unified Communications Manager
Cisco Expressway
Cisco Unity Connection
Meraki access points

About the Partner:

World Wide Technology (WWT)
St. Louis, Missouri
20+ offices internationally
Cisco Gold Partner
Consulting
Cloud
Digital
Security
Supply Chain Operations
ATC platform

Date 11/21

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