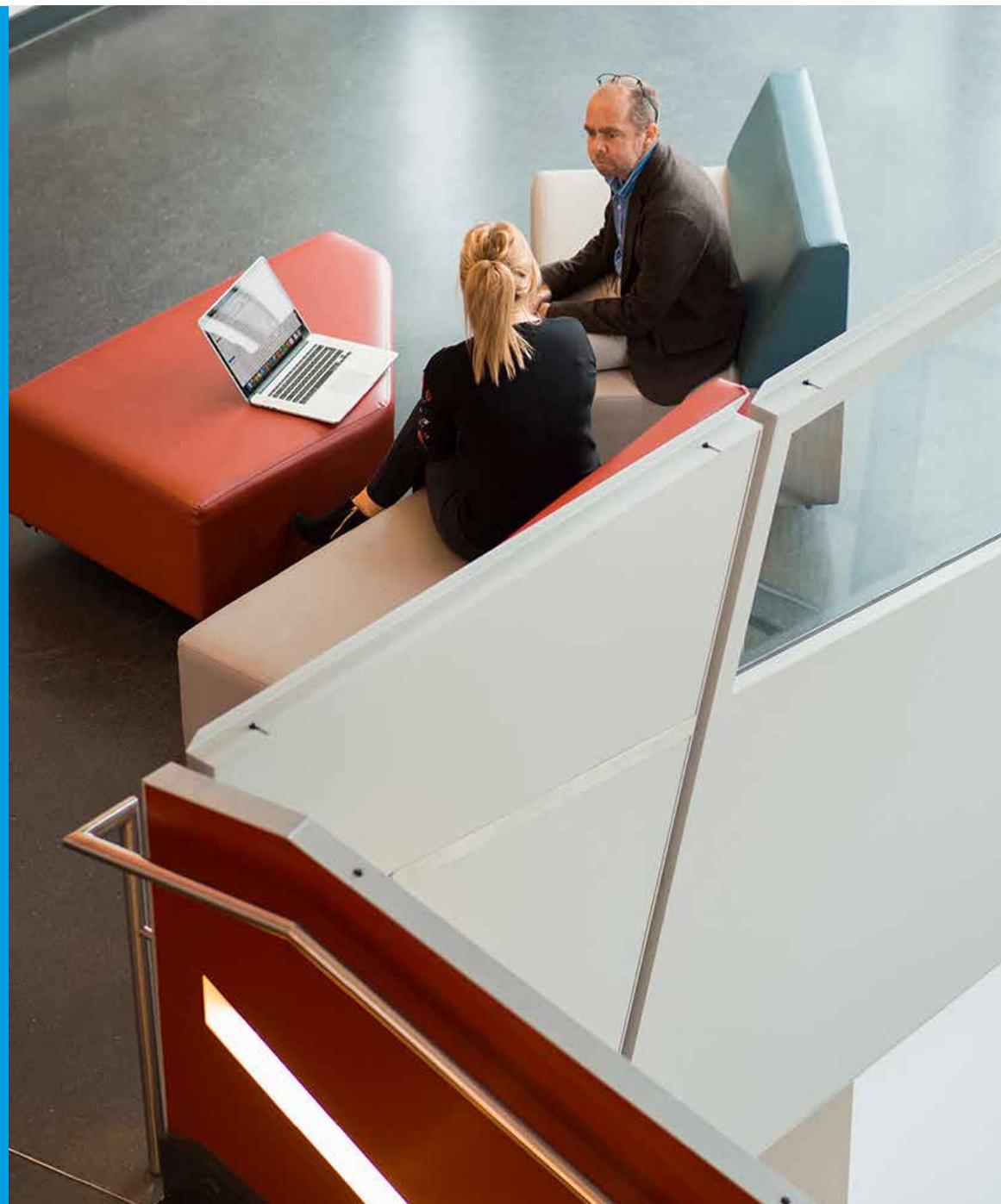# Underpinning unified communications at a global energy giant

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Well-known energy company selects **VQ Conference Manager** to underpin its new service and comply with strict government requirements

CISCO
Compatible

The customer need

Our customer had chosen Cisco Meeting Server to replace an outsourced audio conferencing service, with the aim of making big savings on call costs. It needed off-the-shelf software to manage the new service, capable of keeping different business units completely separated.

Our customer is one of the world's most well-known energy companies, with operations spanning the globe. Government requirements stipulate that certain parts of its business are kept strictly separated from others.

The energy giant was using an outsourced audio conferencing service, which was resulting in high dial-in costs. To reduce these, it was working with a conferencing service provider to bring the capability in-house, using the Cisco Meeting Server across its global businesses.

To operate the new platform, which would be used for both audio and video conferencing, the energy company needed an off-the shelf management tool, so that its in-house development teams could remain focused on customer-facing work, rather than building a custom tool using the Cisco Meeting Server API.

It had a number of requirements for the management software:

• The ability to securely ring-fence calls from certain business units, keeping them completely separate from other parts of its operations

• Enable fast, light-touch user provisioning, including notifying new users of their Space (virtual meeting room) details automatically

• Integration with the energy company's existing single sign-on (SSO) system, for security, ease-of-use and to encourage uptake
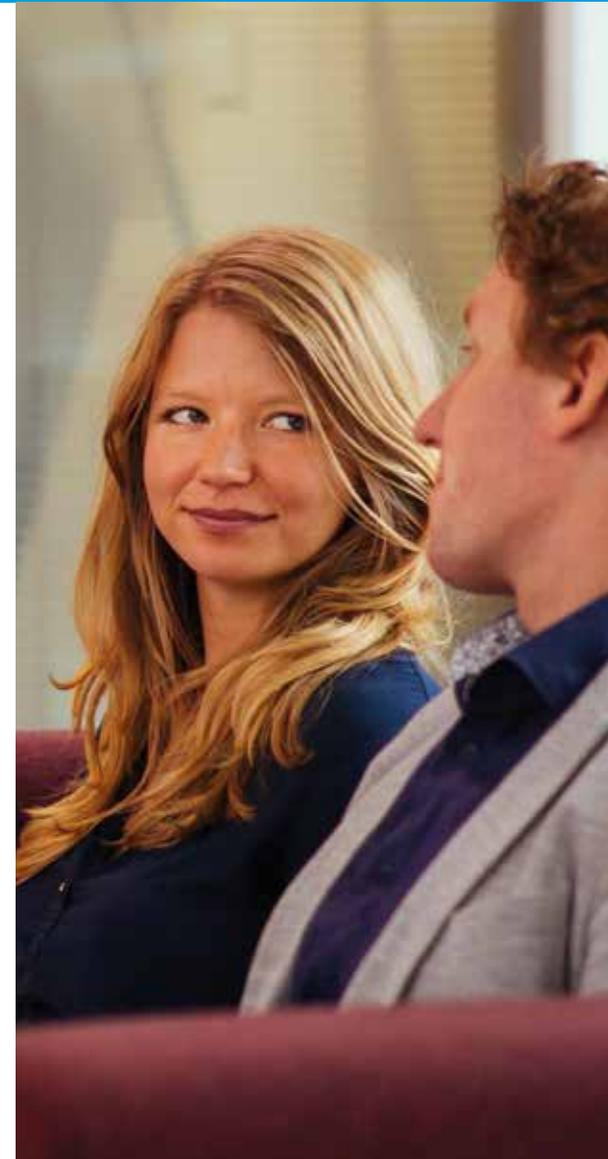
The VQ Communications solution

Proven video and audio conference management software with built-in multi-tenancy provides the foundation for the energy giant's new service. VQ Communications then accelerated delivery of additional features to meet the customer's specific needs.

The energy company chose VQ Conference Manager to underpin its Cisco Meeting Server system. VQ Conference Manager had been proven in similar, tightly regulated, large-scale environments. And while it didn't offer all the required features out-of-the-box, VQ Communications worked with the customer and its service provider to accelerate the availability of features planned for a future release. This included upgrades to single sign-on integration and an automated email notification system to provide new users with their Space details.

A spokesperson for the energy company explains the importance of these features: "If we didn't have the automated email system that VQ built for us, we'd have had to carry out very manual procedures. Instead, we have an extremely light-touch process, which helps massively with speed of delivery and user satisfaction.

"And integrating VQ Conference Manager with Windows' single sign-on brings us numerous benefits: it gives us a clear audit trail, ensures people aren't sharing credentials and, ultimately, makes it easier for our users: having to remember multiple passwords just creates helpdesk tickets."

The other crucial feature was VQ Conference Manager's built-in multi-tenancy. This provides the energy company with the ring-fencing capability it requires, meaning it can operate completely separate services, overseen by different teams.

VQ's technical experts worked alongside the energy company and its communications service provider to install and configure the new platform.
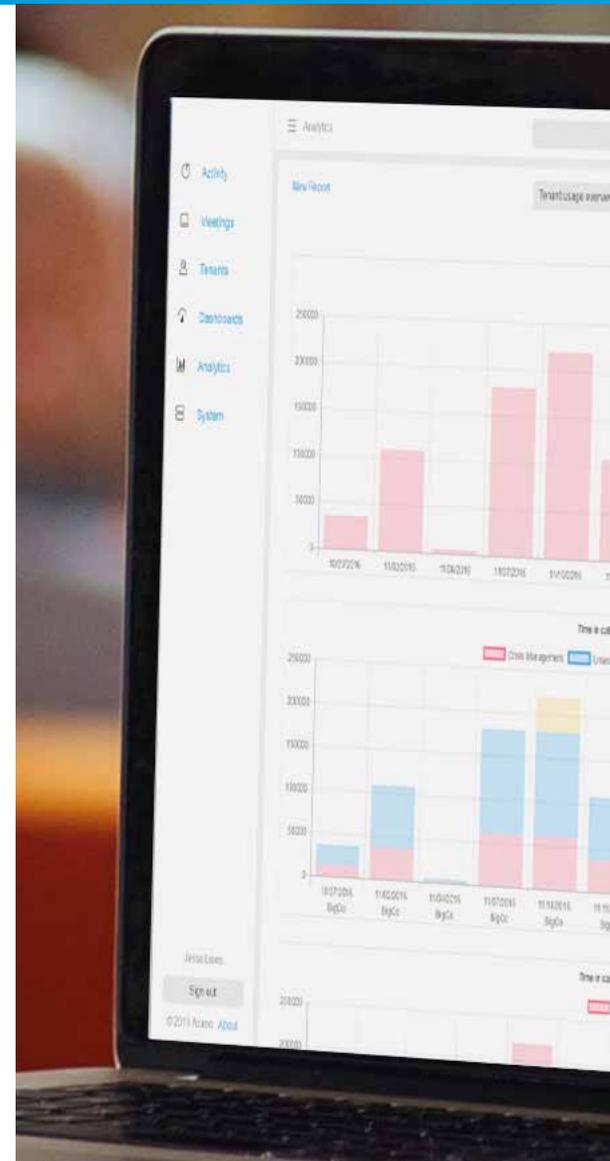
The business outcomes

Popularity of new service means usage has grown by more than 25%, while cost savings from European rollout are over US$800K per year. Significant further savings are forecast when the customer expands the service to other regions.

Following successful commissioning of the new and improved VQ features, the energy giant was able to roll out its new audio and video conferencing service on-schedule, initially to its European businesses.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with monthly participant numbers around 30,000, between them clocking up 3.5 million minutes of calls. This usage is between 25% and 33% higher than the energy company was averaging on its old audio conferencing service.

The success of the Cisco Meeting Server-based platform means our customer has migrated all its standard users off the outsourced system, resulting in savings of more than US$800K per year.

And with the video capability making it easier for employees to participate in meetings without physically being in the same locations, the company is saving money on travel and helping its people achieve better work-life balances.

The next phase in the journey will be to extend the service to the energy firm's North American businesses, where it is forecasting similar reductions in call costs.

The customer representative concludes: "We found VQ Communications very collaborative, which is essential to any delivery of off-the-shelf software. Their help with the setup of our conferencing platform was crucial, both in terms of their configuration knowledge and the new functionality they accelerated into the product."

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