North American Construction Group increases productivity through unified and collaborative solutions.

With over 50 years of history, North American Construction Group Inc. (NACG) is one of Canada’s largest construction and mining contractors focused on delivering high value mining, site preparation, and piling services and expertise to Canadian resources and construction industries. NACG has offices throughout Canada, many of which serve clients in diverse and remote geographic regions. With many sites in remote locations, a strong infrastructure became increasingly important to support nearly 3000 employees and a broad customer base.

The organization focuses on customer service by providing their clients with the benefit of years of knowledge, expertise, sustainability and earned trust in their abilities and services. Streamlined communication and collaboration on projects at any time and in any location, is critical to NACG’s ability to meet their goals.

Acrodex has been and continues to be an innovative provider of professional IT services and technical solutions to NACG. The North American Construction Group is supported by a passionate IT team, spearheaded by IT Infrastructure Manager, Lowell MacDougall. Acrodex worked closely with NACG’s IT team to find a solution that would leverage NACG’s existing tools, to help them utilize their resources more efficiently and support business growth across Canada.

Key Benefits

- The new solution brought over 600 users closer together by removing communication barriers.
- Acrodex helped NACG maximize the value of their current infrastructure by integrating existing technologies with newer value-added capabilities.
- Features like Presence and Instant Messaging have made communication easier, convenient and more efficient.
- Integration of the Cisco phone system and mobile devices have streamlined NACG’s communications.
The Opportunity

Eliminate communication and collaboration challenges in the existing infrastructure and identify areas for enhancement.

The North American Construction Group’s move to Lync 2010 was part of the organization’s Unified Communications (UC) corporate strategy. The executives and IT team were aware of the potential value of UC and were interested in fully integrating their existing systems, with new capabilities. To help NACG make a value-driven decision, Acrodex illustrated the potential Return on Investment (ROI) for the business.

“Communication needs to be easily accessible and reliable for us all of the time and in any location. In our fast paced industry we need to take advantage of technologies that can help save us time and money while increasing efficiency,” explains NACG’s Manager of IT Infrastructure Lowell MacDougall.

One of the challenges NACG faced was that the existing infrastructure (OCS 2007) was not being used to its full potential, which hindered collaboration. For the intended users to adopt the new Lync 2010 solution, it was important to ensure that they were not frustrated by the change. To create interest, the users needed to be made aware of how it could simplify and enhance their everyday communications and the way they do business.

“It was essential to thoroughly understand NACG’s current and future technology state to ensure that the Lync solution would be successfully deployed today and have the capacity to adapt to changing business requirements in the future. Also, the transition from their previous OCS environment to their new Lync solution had to be seamless to ensure that day-to-day business was not interrupted,” explains Joseph L’Heureux, Client Manager at Acrodex.

By implementing a more collaborative and unified solution NACG would be able to have features like Instant Messaging, Presence information, enhanced audio/video conferencing and new features such as document sharing, desktop sharing and white boarding abilities, ultimately helping them to achieve their business goals.

“To address the current issues and add value, Acrodex reviewed the business and technical environment of NACG to find out what the Lync 2010 requirements were. We took a look at their hardware and software needs, provided Exchange 2007/2010 pre-requisites for Lync 2010, designed a Microsoft Lync solution to meet their requirements and then implemented the design,” explains Unified Communications National Practice Manager, Glen Darling, for Acrodex.

“Through the analysis, design, and deployment phases, we were able to evaluate the strength of the solution, including availability, reliability, performance, and scalability of the environment that was required by NACG and recommended by Microsoft and Acrodex - creating the best fit for NACG.”

North American Construction Groups Environment:

Acrodex at Work:
- End-to-end design
- Defined support processes
- IT support staff training
- Deployment of the solution

“The unified approach has made doing business much easier. We are now able to minimize the inconvenience of geographic challenges and bring our teams and clients together in a faster and better way. It all comes down to the ability to build better relationships.”

Lowell MacDougall
Manager of Infrastructure
NACG
The Solution

Analyze, design and deploy new UC Capabilities into NACG’s existing infrastructure.

NACG required a tangible ROI and a more unified approach to collaboration. After the analysis phase, Acrodex recommended an upgrade from their existing OCS 2007 R2 environment to a three server Lync 2010 system. Acrodex devised a plan to ensure that users were aware of the benefits and had access to the tools that would help them learn how to use the new features.

“We suggested configuring Unified Communications through the installation of Lync 2010, with services including IM&P, A/V Conferencing, Mobility, PSTN routing to Cisco, client policies, Exchange Integration, federation with existing external partners/clients and the integration of Cisco phone Presence with Lync. The proposed solution also took into account the migration of over 600 NACG users to Lync 2010, from their existing OCS environment, and the decommissioning of the existing OCS 2007 R2 environment,” explains Darling.

“Acrodex worked with us to come up with a unified solution that fit our specific needs,” explained MacDougall. “They developed an upgrade from our older office communication implementation to the Lync 2010 solution. Acrodex managed the project from the initial analysis, design, solution and deployment phase and documented the solution to a standard that supported our business continuity.”

“The Acrodex team has made the experience and transition smoother for us. They were supportive during the implementation phase and responsive to our needs. Now that we are in the production phase our Acrodex resources are working on resolving any reported issues. They provided operational transition to the NACG support team for our client rollout, via Group Policy Object (GPO), and Microsoft training materials for our users, which is helping everyone to understand and embrace the new solution,” says MacDougall.

Acrodex worked with NACG’s support staff to provide documentation and conduct a knowledge transfer of the Lync Server-based infrastructure and implementation. Microsoft Lync user guides, posters, and mugs were some of the tools supplied to help promote the new UC solution.

Acrodex Unified Communications Services

Anytime, anywhere communication.

Acrodex is your end to end Unified Communications solutions partner.

Acrodex Unified Communications solutions make “anytime, anywhere” communication a reality for any size of organization. Implementing a UC platform can eliminate communication barriers, helping you strengthen relationships within your organization and with your valued customers.

Unified Communications integrates multiple real time business communication vehicles that exist within your organization into one single solution. Organizations are seeing improved business operational agility, productivity and automation of key business processes, with the implementation of UC solutions.

Acrodex is a Microsoft Gold® certified partner with Unified Communication Solutions competency, and a Cisco® Gold certified partner.

Acrodex UC&C Professional Services

- Consulting Services
- Planning and Assessment Services
- Implementation Strategies and Deployment Services
- Product Procurement Services
- Infrastructure Solutions
- Managed Services
- License Advisory and Optimization
- Staff Augmentation Services
- Post-implementation Support
The Result

Maximized value of infrastructure and adoption of solution by users.

NACG personnel are already becoming aware of the new solution and its benefits. With Acrodex’s help, NACG was able to take a solution that was underutilized and upgraded it to give it a new life. Through the internal advertising of the solution, NACG expects to see early employee adoption of the solution, which will substantially increase their ability to communicate within the organization and with their clients.

Some of the benefits NACG noticed immediately was the integration of their Cisco phone system and mobile devices. Instant Messaging added convenience and Presence gave them the flexibility of knowing the availability of their contacts. By combining products like Instant Messaging and email into one platform, customers and employees of NACG now experience consistency throughout multiple devices and applications.

“For us at NACG, Lync helped in providing our users with mobility, federation and external conferencing. The integration of our existing Cisco Telephony system for Lync calls and the integration of Lync with Cisco Phone Presence, made our communication seamless, and the device options made it possible for us to take advantage of the Lync Soft client for VOIP and Conferencing” explains MacDougall.

“Acrodex provided us with informed experts including the project lead and Cisco Voice expert, who worked closely with our IT team during the installation of the new solution to ensure the process went smoothly, assessing any issues that came up,” MacDougall adds.

The new Lync server also allowed for collocated services such as A/V conferencing and mediation services. Existing components were integrated into the new system for cost savings to NACG. While it’s too early to perform a cost benefit analysis at NACG, they have reported that Lync is being used by their customers and they anticipate that the usage and scope of use will increase once the training has begun.

MacDougall explains how Lync 2010 addressed the need for a Unified Communication strategy. “We now have an integrated application that helps us keep track of our contacts’ availability, send instant messages, start or join an audio, video or web conference, make a phone call or do desktop video. Streamlining our previous products into one unified system has allowed NACG to increase productivity and ultimately save us money.”

The North American Construction Group is planning to maximize the value of Lync 2010 through brown bag lunch sessions, formal classroom training and continued presence of Lync on the web through their “Connect” home page.

Unified Communications & Collaboration

Anytime, anywhere communication is within reach, and Acrodex can help you get there. Capitalize on increased productivity and reduced total cost of ownership while building on existing IT investments. Get in touch with us!