CISCO SYSTEMS

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

ANORMED PROVES EVEN SMALL FIRMS FIND BIG BENEFITS WITH CISCO SECURITY AND IP COMMUNICATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CUSTOMER

- AnorMED Inc.
- Focused on discovering and developing breakthrough drugs that make a difference in the lives of people coping with cancer and HIV
- Founded in 1996, and based in Langley, British Columbia.
- Approximately 140 employees

INDUSTRY

- Biotechnology

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Small but growing so need scalable solutions
- Reliability and availability are crucial to operations
- About one quarter of staff are mobile workers
- Keeping data and computers secure is a vital necessity
- PBX telephone system reaching capacity
- Switching infrastructure needed upgrading

NETWORK SOLUTION

- Meets the need for a comprehensive and self-defending network security solution
- Securely integrates voice and other collaborative data applications
- Provides full range of network lifecycle services

BUSINESS VALUE

- Optimum uptime through excellent security
- Lowered capital costs due to scalability
- Boosted mobile efficiency, cost savings
- Increased productivity, time savings
- Reduced management and training costs
- Better service to users

As a small but growing biotechnology company, AnorMED Inc. required cost-effective IT solutions that met not only today's demands but could scale to future needs without repeated investments. AnorMED found a solution in two Cisco offerings: Cisco Security Agent and Cisco IP Communications, which are proving to be easy to scale while containing costs and boosting productivity and enterprise efficiency.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

AnorMED Inc. needed software solutions that would not only fit the bill now, but that would also meet various demands down the road. Based in Langley, B.C., AnorMED is a biotechnology company focused on the discovery, development and commercialization of therapeutic products in the areas of hematology, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and oncology. Founded in 1996, the company has grown to more than 140 employees. The company has a number of core products and programs in various stages of development with the aim of discovering and developing breakthrough drugs that make a difference in the lives of people coping with cancer and HIV.

Given that the value of the company is based primarily on its intellectual property, keeping data secure is a vital necessity.

About one quarter of AnorMED's staff are mobile workers, including executives, investor relations staff and clinical staff traveling to various investigator sites and hospitals throughout North America. Some of these people work from their homes located in various parts of Canada and the United States. About three years ago, AnorMED was looking for a solution to help secure the data on distributed end points and the company's critical servers.

"System availability is critical for timely submissions to various regulatory agencies so preventing network or host infiltration is very important," explains Mike Engels, AnorMED's Senior Network Administrator.

Positive data generated through programs within the company continued to initiate growth that was straining the legacy PBX system.

"We had to make the decision whether to replace our telephony system with another PBX system or look to new technologies such as IP telephony," Engels recalls.

The company's growth was also prompting it to make infrastructure improvements to its switching core and peripheral switches.

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"Cisco Security Agent in itself increases productivity, reduces down time, reduces administrative support effort in having to clean up from an infected computer and reduces the exposure of our system to malicious code.

— Mike Engels, Senior Network Administrator, AnorMED

NETWORK SOLUTION

To protect critically sensitive information and prevent costly downtime, AnorMED selected Cisco Security Agent (CSA) to meet its security needs. Engels reports that an instructor at a security-training event he attended suggested he consider CSA, which was presented as a very good, host-based, heuristic intrusion prevention system. Engels evaluated it and decided "it was as good as its billing."

After purchasing the management platform and licenses, AnorMED began implementing CSA.

"That's where we began our relationship with Cisco," Engels recalls. "Through tremendous service from our local IBM team and Cisco engineers in Vancouver, we began to establish a really good relationship with Cisco. We participated in various security user groups and forums they were hosting and became quite comfortable and familiar with the product."

About a year and a half later, AnorMED made the decision to replace its PBX system.

"We did a cost comparison between PBX and IP telephony; they were very close, a near wash, in fact," Engels says. "We looked at the merits of both systems and, based on our relationship with Cisco and IBM, the security aspects and other features and functionality built into the integrated Cisco network, we opted to consolidate our voice and data infrastructure into one and roll out Cisco IP Communications."

Cisco IP Communications is a complete system, which securely integrates voice, video, and other collaborative data applications into intelligent network communications solutions. It offers IP telephony, unified communications, rich-media conferencing, IP video broadcasting, and customer contact solutions.

"Looking to future growth, expansion, scalability and ease of management, it was really quite an easy decision," Engels adds. "Rather than adding bits here and there as needed, we were looking to implement a complete communications solution that would serve our needs well into the future."

Contracts were signed near the end of January 2005 and full implementation, including upgrading the network infrastructure, was completed by mid-April. The cut to the new system was on Friday evening and when everyone came back Monday morning, they had new telephones on their desks.

Engels praises the project management expertise of the IBM Canada team who helped AnorMED devise a very robust implementation plan. "IBM did a great job of addressing all aspects of the technical implementation and that was key to the smooth delivery of the project in such a condensed timeline," recalls Engels.

"Knowing the telephone is something everybody uses on a daily basis, we felt communication throughout the project was key in obtaining user buy in. I really wanted to give the staff a feeling that they had input into the design of the system, and so we conducted focus groups early in the project and communicated with the staff every step of the way," he explains. "Through the planning and the diligence by IBM and us, we were able to get everybody onboard and the transition was really seamless."

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It helped that the system was up and ready three or four days prior to activating the external lines on IP telephony. With the system working internally and a few spot phones on some desks, staff could try out the phones ahead of time. As well, AnorMED set up a training lab and required everyone in the company to attend a training session, which lasted about 1 ½ hours. Within this lab, staff could place calls, record voice messages, retrieve messages, play with the different ringer tones – just become familiar with the handset and some of the enhanced features like call park, the address book, conferencing functions and various services.

"The communications architecture IBM developed for AnorMED cost-effectively provided their employees with an enhanced collaborative network. It enhanced AnorMED's infrastructure investment while offering a robust voice and data communications environment. It was more than a technical solution, it was a business solution, and everyone agreed that made sense," says Patricia Stander of IBM Canada.

The AnorMED network is comprised of Cisco Catalyst switches, a Cisco PIX firewall and a Cisco SSL Virtual Private Network (VPN) Concentrator. The company currently has 224 Cisco IP phones, 42 laptops running CSA and 23 servers running CSA.

BUSINESS VALUE

Reliability, scalability, manageability and cost savings are the key benefits AnorMED enjoys from Cisco Security Agent and Cisco IP Communications. "With our Cisco IP Communications system, we have enabled our mobile users to be more productive while traveling, and we have realized a reduction in the management costs associated with telephony," says Engels.

Benefits include:

- **Optimum uptime through excellent security**: AnorMED is running CSA on all its servers and distributed endpoints. CSA is heuristic-based rather than relying on definitions of already launched worms and viruses, and it monitors the computer prompting the user if there are activities that occur outside the normal realm of activity for any particular executable or file access. Engels points out that when the Sasser worm was released and the Lsass.exe service behaved out of its normal realm of behaviour, CSA detected that and prompted the user to indicate how to proceed. This intervention enabled AnorMED to contain the one laptop that had become infected and prevent a virus outbreak. In addition, AnorMED benefits from security built in to each individual Cisco device and port, for a wholly secure solution.

  "Even before our antivirus vendor updated their virus definition release, CSA was able to detect and block the Sasser virus," he says. "That's consistent across every major virus release since we implemented CSA, and that's with the default policy and no customization – which is tremendous. CSA in itself increases productivity, reduces down time, reduces administrative support effort in having to clean up from an infected computer and reduces the exposure of our system to malicious code."

- **Lowered capital costs due to scalability:** The company's IP communications server infrastructure is scalable for up to 2500 employees, so no further capital investments will be required in that regard. "It's nice to have such scalability in addition to the consolidation of voice and data networks. Now we are able to purchase a specific model of switch and have that switch support both voice and data communications with only one cabling run to the workstation," says Engels. "That's one of the key reasons we purchased it -- we don't have to make any significant future infrastructure changes or investments. It is really going to enable us to keep those types of capital costs down."

  Scalability also served the company well initially with CSA. "You can be very selective in which computers or servers you have the software running on," he explains. "We didn't have to do a forklift installation with all of our laptops and all of our servers. We could protect selected key servers and the most mobile of our laptop users first, and later deploy the software to the remaining servers and laptops."

- **Boosted mobile efficiency, cost savings:** AnorMED's clinical research associates (CRAs) are individuals visiting investigator sites, which are clinical sites that are performing tests or investigations with the company's compounds. They spend a lot of time on the road across North America. Having easy access to their business telephone is a convenient productivity booster. Investor relations staff, often traveling to meet with various investors, also benefit from the safe, convenient access.

  "The IP Communicator takes mobile computing to a new level," Engels reports. "With their laptops, mobile users are not only able to perform all their regular data processing functions, but they have their business telephone at their fingertips as well. It is convenient and provides cost savings. We can now dial their extension and wherever they happen to be, they can pick up their phone as if they were at their desk. That's a tremendous benefit."

- **Increased productivity, timesavings:** Unified messaging is especially appreciated by users because they can check their voicemail through their email and their email through their voicemail. Engels says it helps in tracking conversations. "Voicemail can be filed in the directory structure users create within their email client, along with other correspondence from any particular individual," he explains.

- **Reduced management and training costs:** Consolidating the management of voice and data networks has reduced AnorMED's IT training costs. No additional training investment is required since the company has the in-house expertise to handle the moves, additions and changes (MACs), which account for a large percentage of time and energy spent managing a telephony system. "As we're already familiar with Cisco products and technology, we can manage the telephony network in the same manner as we manage our data network," Engels explains.

- **Better service to users:** With the legacy PBX telephony system, just one administrator was the point person for handling all the telephony situations, which often led to support delays. With the new IP telephony solution, any IT staff member can address the needs of the user group. "MACs are now very straight forward and the implementation of the IP telephony system has reduced that time by approximately 75 per cent," Engels adds.

NEXT STEPS

Engels expects the usage of the IP Communicator for the virtual or mobile office will continue to grow. In the meantime, he sees it as a good investment that is looking after itself.

"You don't have to continue to modify the system," he stresses. "Once your system is configured, the only management is simple moves, adds and changes – and that's really key."

"It's been a pleasure working with Cisco and IBM on this project to really meet our needs," he concludes.

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