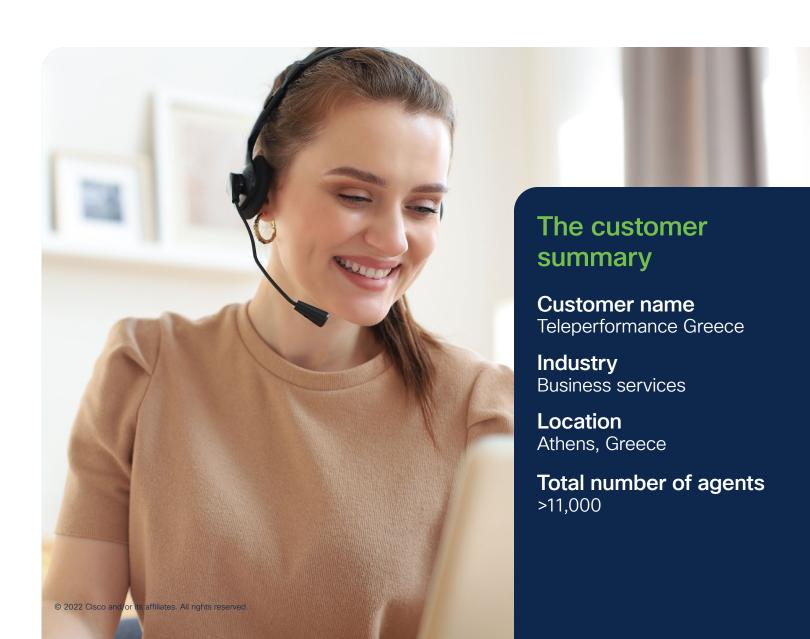ıllııllı
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Teleperformance case study

# Working Remotely Strengthens Teleperformance Business Continuity

Unified Cisco architecture enables contact center specialists to flex to remote working in the face of a global pandemic



## The customer summary

**Customer name**
Teleperformance Greece

**Industry**
Business services

**Location**
Athens, Greece

**Total number of agents**
>11,000

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## Business challenge

- Ensure business continuity in the face of a global pandemic
- Enable >8000 agents to work from home
- Maintain service levels throughout the transition to a new model

## Network solution

- Cisco Meraki™ MX
- Cisco® Identity Services Engine (ISE)
- Cisco Secure Firewalls

## Business results

- Established a hybrid work model
- Protected the well-being of staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic
- Grew revenues by 20 percent over the subsequent two years

### Flexing to a work-from-home model to assist critical customer support

Teleperformance is a global leader in the provision of customer support. It works with some of the world's biggest organizations, delivering services in 265 languages. Teleperformance lines of business work across verticals such as finance, automotive, media, healthcare, and many other global industries.

Traditionally a location-based enterprise, with teams of agents working out of huge, city center sites, Teleperformance operates 450 contact centers in 83 countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced a rapid rethink of this model. To keep staff safe, Teleperformance needed to quickly move teams out of its high-density contact centers while maintaining front-line support for its global customers.

"We'd been exploring the idea of agents working from home for more than five years," says Nikos Tsahouridis, Chief Information Officer, Teleperformance Greece. "But the idea had never got much traction. Now, with the COVID-19 pandemic, management wanted 100 percent working from home—and for this to be in place almost overnight."

This presented an enormous challenge. Over the last 15 years, Teleperformance Greece has grown to be one of the key subsidiaries within the wider business group. Its Athens contact center is home to 11,000 agents, working across 13 languages. Athens provides critical, pan-European support for 60-plus global clients. The work-from-home project needed to be delivered against a backdrop of rocketing demand for hardware and tech support.

"We'd never considered anything on this scale. Not only did we need to enable 8000 agents to work from home, but we also needed to roll out to 60 different clients, each with their own setup and policies."

**Nikos Tsahouridis**
Chief Information Officer, Teleperformance Greece

"In the five years we'd been looking at working from home, we'd managed to establish just 17 agents," says Tsahouridis. "We'd never considered anything on this scale. We were effectively starting with a blank piece of paper. Not only did we need to enable 8000 agents to work from home, but we also needed to roll out to 60 different clients, each with their own setup and policies."

## Responsive network to ensure business continuity

The situation wasn't as dire as it first appeared. Teleperformance Greece already had significant network fundamentals in place. Not all its operations were concentrated in one Athens contact center; the business had opened satellite offices in Thessaloniki and Chania, Crete. In doing so, Teleperformance had created a coherent network architecture, allowing a secure, seamless link between sites.

This had been achieved with one network vendor: Cisco.

"Having a single vendor setup helped," says Yannis Kampourakis, Managing Partner, smartNS, Cisco partner and long-term supplier to Teleperformance Greece. "Cisco is one of the only companies to offer such a breadth of network and security solutions. It meant we could move quickly in terms of hardware, integration, and authentication."

Around one-quarter of agents were set up with a thin client solution, leaving 8000 needing a VPN. Core to the response was the use of Cisco Meraki, Cisco Secure Firewalls, and Cisco Identity Services Engine (ISE).

Where there were issues with voice quality, Teleperformance used a Cisco Meraki VPN, enabling agents to plug in a hard phone.

"Having tried competitor solutions, the big differentiator with Cisco was the flexibility of Meraki and Cisco AnyConnect®. The ability to integrate with the rest of the infrastructure created a robust technical solution to our business continuity problems," says Nikos Lekkas, IT Network Manager, Teleperformance Greece.

Cisco Identity Services Engine enabled a simple, seamless approach to extending the workplace and unifying access policy to remote users. This dynamic and automated approach to remote access enabled Teleperformance and 60 of its clients to be resilient amidst unprecedented change while managing risk across the distributed network.

"I don't know how we would have managed this so quickly without the expertise of smartNS and Cisco," says Tsahouridis. It is a sentiment shared by Lekkas: "Our internal network team, together with smartNS, succeeded in quickly adapting the solution and deploying into production. It would have taken us a year to achieve what we did in two months."

## Supporting employees and agents through the crisis

The most immediate impact was that there was no noticeable effect on clients or revenues through a traumatic 2020. Financials at Teleperformance Greece were in line with 2019 budgets; no clients were lost.

"The feedback from clients was outstanding. We were praised for the quality and speed of the transition of our people to the work-from-home environment, always keeping at top of mind the health and safety of our employees."

**Nikos Lekkas**
IT Network Manager, Teleperformance Greece

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From an employee welfare perspective, Teleperformance was able to support 8000 colleagues through the pandemic. Working from home allowed safer working conditions, and business continuity provided financial security.

The contact center industry lives by performance metrics. Tsahouridis says metrics held firm at Teleperformance Greece—answering times, call resolution, and customer satisfaction (CSAT) scores. While call average volumes maintained 2019 levels, there were unexpected spikes. Despite these peaks, Cisco enabled a seamless transition to working from home.

"When we first started working from home, our biggest concerns were attrition rates, or agents being late to sign on in the morning," says Tsahouridis, "but neither of those panned out. In fact, we did better in both criteria versus bricks-and-mortar."

"The feedback from clients was outstanding," Lekkas adds. "We were praised for the quality and speed of the transition of our people to the work-from-home environment, always keeping at top of mind the health and safety of our employees."

The success of working from home will have long-term implications on the business. The robust hybrid work model that has been established allows Teleperformance to flex between on- and off-site teams. Teleperformance now has a tested business continuity process and is better able to scale resources up and down depending on client needs. Teleperformance Greece had previously recruited within commuting distance of its Athens Thessaloniki and Chania offices. Today, thanks to the Cisco solutions, it is possible to extend that talent pool nationwide.

"We can recruit from overseas, if necessary," says Tsahouridis. "The fact is, Greece has large communities of expats, with language skills and life experience that would be an asset to the company. It will also be easier to recruit from rural Greece. Again, this diversifies our workforce and is good for the national economy."

The success of the pandemic response reinforces the position of Teleperformance Greece as the most multilingual of the group's operating companies. It enables Teleperformance Greece to offer clients pan-European rather than country-specific support. Clients have responded: revenues in the two years since the pandemic are up 20 percent. The result is a business that is more adaptable, more varied, and better able to serve the needs of a broader range of clients.

# Learn More

Please visit: cisco.com

## Product list

Cisco Meraki MX250 Cloud-Managed Security Appliance

Cisco Meraki MX450 Cloud-Managed Security Appliance

Cisco Meraki MR30H Cloud-Managed Access Point

Cisco Secure Firewall

Cisco Identity Services Engine (ISE)

Cisco AnyConnect Secure Mobility Client

Cisco ASR 1001-HX Router