



Midco Achieves More with Efficient, Effective Collaboration

Discover how a regional cable provider kickstarted its workplace transformation with full-scale adoption of Cisco Webex®

Founded in 1931, Midco today is a leading provider of reliable, high-speed internet via wired and fixed wireless technology. By 2025, Midco will deploy 10G, the next great leap for broadband—while also expanding its fixed wireless network to rural areas. The company also delivers cable TV including MidcoSN (a regional sports network), voice, home security, and data center and advertising services, plus wholesale networking solutions. Midco serves 385,000 homes and businesses in more than 400 communities in Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

To stay competitive in a demanding market, Midco needs its employees to be able to communicate, coordinate, and collaborate effectively. That wasn't always easy as the company grew and employees began to work across multiple locations. Midco implemented videoconferencing and instant messaging platforms, but instead of streamlining workflows, the siloed technology ultimately slowed people down. It was time to make a big change.

Technology doesn't help if no one uses it

Meetings at Midco were typically scheduled for at least an hour, because employees knew that the first 15 minutes or more would be used trying to make the videoconferencing or screen-sharing technology work. Even outside of meetings, it was often difficult to interact with remote coworkers through instant messaging, because the company had several platforms and employees had to send emails back and forth to coordinate how they were going to IM each other.

“Our team wasn't as efficient as I knew they could be,” says Scott Sylliaasen, Director of IT Operations at Midco. “They were spending too much time worrying about technology and whether it was working, and not enough time with the agenda and priorities they needed to talk about. They were spending a lot of time ‘swirling’ before actually getting anything done.” And sometimes, the employees simply stopped using the technology altogether.

The customer summary

Customer name

Midco

Industry

Regional broadband, phone, and wireless provider

Location

Headquartered in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; operates in five states

Size

385,000 customers; 1,600 employees





Business challenge summary

- Siloed videoconferencing and multiple instant messaging platforms made it difficult to connect and collaborate
- Frustration and confusion about the technology often made users stop using it altogether



Solution summary

- All-in-one, integrated Cisco Webex Teams™ platform, including DX80 desktop devices, Webex Boards, Room Kits, and Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI)
- Transformed user experience with seamless videoconferencing and messaging capabilities
- Cross-functional team drove companywide adoption with a wealth of information resources and engaging training event



Business results summary

- Increased usage of Webex collaboration solutions by 110% in six months
- Most meetings reduced from one hour to 30 minutes because now the technology works

Collaboration solution

As a company, Midco isn't afraid of technology—it embraces cutting-edge advancements and, in fact, has been a longtime partner with Cisco in deploying new technology in support of delivering innovative services to its customers. It had the first North American production deployment of cbr-8 and Data Over Cable Service Interface Specification (DOCSIS) 3.1 Upstream [Orthogonal Frequency-division Multiple Access (OFDMA) and the first production deployment worldwide of DOCSIS 3.1 Downstream [Orthogonal Frequency-Division Multiplexing (OFDM)] and Cloud Native Broadband Router (cnBR).

Midco had also implemented some Webex applications, such as Webex Meetings, but they were simply some of the many siloed tools employees used. After realizing that people were using four different persistent messaging applications, each with limited capabilities, the IT team decided to focus on Webex Teams as their primary collaboration platform. Thanks to their previous experiences with Cisco, they knew it would provide the optimal user experience.

Driving adoption to achieve collaboration success

Midco enlisted Cisco partner GDT in the early stages of the comprehensive Webex implementation to make the solution operational. After overcoming technical barriers and with support of change management, the company configured its infrastructure to support Webex Teams, with DX80 desktop devices, Webex Boards, Room Kits, and Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI).

The company eliminated its other messaging and conferencing platforms and saw Webex Teams as the all-in-one solution that could transform employee collaboration and communication.

Simply implementing the technology wasn't enough, however. Midco leaders knew that real success would be achieved only with a high adoption rate from the end users, the employees. "We knew we had to convince our users that [Webex] is something they cannot live without," says Sylliaasen.

To achieve that, Midco created a dedicated, cross-functional adoption team that included IT, marketing, and project management personnel—as well as GDT representatives and Cisco Customer Success Manager Bethany Duffrin—to provide a thorough and seamless transition to Webex Teams.

"We met weekly for five months and, together, have transformed the way users collaborate and get work done," Duffrin says. "Midco created a survey for their users to determine potential adoption barriers and their current perception of Webex, and asked for feedback on which areas needed more focus."

The company also placed high priority on building its internal knowledge database, so users could find information and best practices for using Webex. The marketing team partnered with IT to create quick reference guides and brochures so that a user unfamiliar with Webex could walk into a meeting room and quickly use the technology without hassle.

Midco held a two-day companywide launch event where Cisco representatives offered live demos and targeted training sessions. The company made it fun for the employees with entertainment, prizes, and Webex-branded treats. Everyone felt the initiative was a resounding success, from the end users to executive leadership.

“Team members are joining meetings and rooms quicker. And, productivity is up with meeting time reduced to 30 minutes because the technology works.”

Scott Sylliaasen

Director of IT Operations, Midco

A more productive provider

Within six months, Midco saw a 110% increase in Webex usage. Employees are using the tools to communicate, coordinate, and collaborate like never before.

“Once we got our end users to start adopting it all, the integration started falling in line,” says Sylliaasen. “We’re starting to see more open communication with people. Team members aren’t struggling anymore with the technology. They are joining meetings and rooms quicker. And, productivity is up with meeting time reduced to 30 minutes because the technology works.”

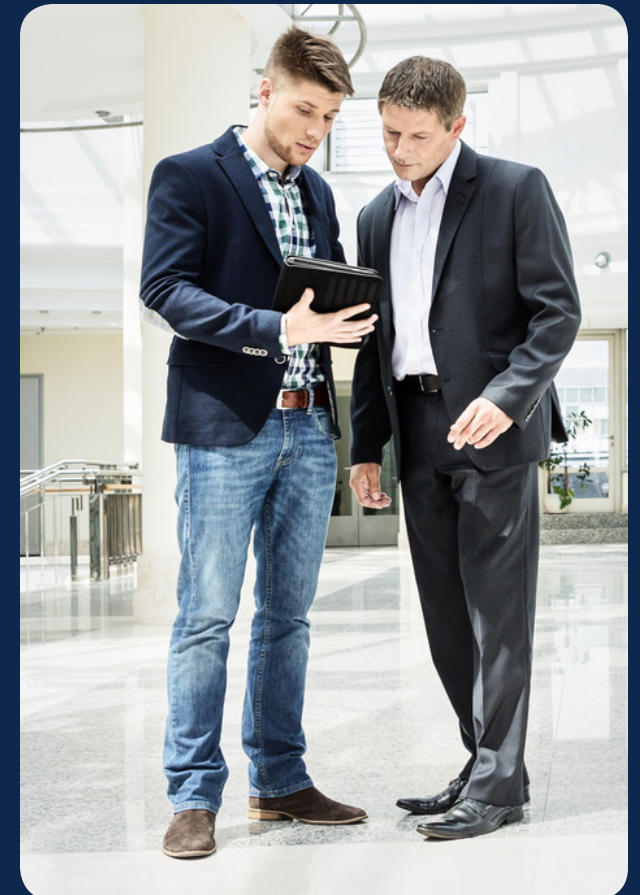
Teams are finding ways to use Webex spaces to share information and make their jobs easier. The customer service team has a space where they share customer issues and how they were resolved—and can also query the network operations center directly about suspected outages or other issues.

“Our Executive Leadership Team uses a space to share their quarterly meetings,” Sylliaasen adds. “It’s a modern tool for them to collaborate with each other, and they’re dispersed all across our footprint.” And every month, the numbers go up—employees are having more meetings, creating more spaces, sharing more files.

All of this productivity is having an impact on customer service and delivering an exceptional customer experience. When Midco salespeople visit customer sites and need to interact with an engineer at headquarters about an issue, the ability to connect with them quickly and efficiently makes customers happy and helps them feel confident that Midco can meet their needs effectively.

Next steps

What’s next? Increased productivity, says Sylliaasen. “We want our team members to feel empowered to take action quicker and make decisions faster. We are working toward an integrated Webex and Office365 implementation. This will be another adoption campaign with the goal of all of our tools and team members working together.”



Lessons learned: Adoption is critical

Getting the right technology in place is the first step to driving workplace transformation. For Midco it was Cisco Webex, which helped the company significantly improve communication and collaboration—which in turn boosted productivity.

Adoption is the next most critical factor. Sylliaasen urges companies to start the adoption process as early as possible when deploying a new technology solution. The earlier people learn how to use the solution and integrate it into their everyday workflow, the more value it can have for the company. “The technology works,” he says. “But if you don’t have end users adopting it, then it doesn’t really matter.”

Call to action

To see how other companies have achieved success with Cisco Collaboration Solutions, please visit <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collaboration/index.html#~case-studies>.

Product list

Webex Teams

DX80 desktop devices

Webex Boards

Room Kits

Virtual desktop infrastructure