



## Manufacturing Giant Improves Communication and Productivity at Reduced Costs

### Overview

**Country or Region:** India

**Industry:** Manufacturing

### Customer Profile

Founded in 1948, Chennai-based Ashok Leyland, is one of India's major manufacturers of commercial vehicles.

### Business Situation

Absence of web conferencing and remote management facilities in existing IT set-up at Ashok Leyland consumed time, cost and efforts.

### Solution

Ashok Leyland deployed several collaboration tools to empower employees. These included Microsoft Exchange Server 2010, SharePoint Server 2010, Lync Server 2010 and Office 2010.

### Benefits

- Faster communication and collaboration
- Improves productivity with comfort level
- Provides cost savings
- Tracks and monitors communication

“The Microsoft platform brings us a collaboration experience that employees with limited technology exposure are also comfortable with. The familiar interface delivers efficiency and productivity and also helps control costs.”

Venkatesh Natarajan, Special Director – IT, Ashok Leyland Ltd

Ashok Leyland takes pride in its smart investments in technology that help meet the company's goals around employee-centricity, efficiency and innovation. It has deployed a number of technologies that enhance communication and collaboration to deliver efficient and effective business management. These include Microsoft Exchange Server 2010, SharePoint Server 2010, along with Microsoft Office 2010 and Lync Server 2010. Together these technologies allow employees to use instant messaging, email, audio, video or web conferencing to become more productive. The time saved in traveling is now effectively utilized for employees to concentrate on business imperatives.



We see significant improvement in business efficiencies, and faster responses along with lower costs of ownership.”

Venkatesh Natarajan,  
Special Director – IT, Ashok Leyland Ltd

“Now distance is not a constraint for face-to-face meetings. With Lync, we are able to collaborate with our colleagues in overseas countries too.”

P Ramamoorthy, Deputy General  
Manager – IT, Ashok Leyland Ltd

## Situation

Founded in 1948 by Raghunandan Saran, Ashok Leyland Ltd is one of India's leading manufacturers of commercial, emergency and military vehicles. Headquartered in Chennai, India, it has six manufacturing plants in India along with two facilities in Prague (Czech Republic) and Ras Al Khaimah (United Arab Emirates). It employs 15,734 employees across six factories and 75 offices. The annual revenue in 2011–12 was US\$ 2,378 million.

The company has embarked on some key initiatives across the organization. These focus on employees, quality, brand, innovation and efficiency. All initiatives must add value across one of these five areas. Keeping the company goals in mind, Venkatesh Natarajan, Special Director – IT, Ashok Leyland, believes IT solutions can help support and deliver results across the company. With this in mind, from a technology perspective he has added three imperatives that IT must bring to the organization. These include establishing information and collaboration culture and a focus on streamlining business processes.

Ashok Leyland extensively uses applications for business process management and productivity. Two years ago, Ashok Leyland deployed SAP ERP in order to focus on bringing consistency and accuracy to processes. From an information standpoint, it identified business analytics and business intelligence as core areas.

From a collaboration and communication perspective, the company was using the Microsoft platform extensively, including Microsoft Office 2010, Exchange Server 2007 for communication, and Microsoft SharePoint Server 2007 for content and portal management. The company was also using Microsoft InfoPath 2007 for workflow based request and approval processes, for

example, end user requests for hardware, software, miscellaneous accessories, etc.

These solutions brought several benefits, such as streamlining processes, better employee productivity and easy communication. However, these did not include audio and video conferencing, a must-have in today's business model. Besides, there were connectivity challenges at the manufacturing plants in remote parts of the country.

Ashok Leyland wanted to improve collaboration company-wide, starting from the remote factories and offices in smaller towns and cities. “We envisioned a seamless collaboration platform that allows teams to easily communicate anytime from anywhere, and use real time information to improve decision making and problem solving.”

## Solution

Ashok Leyland has an Enterprise Agreement with Microsoft. In June 2012, it decided to upgrade Microsoft Exchange Server 2010. The main aim was to tighten integration with the Microsoft Office productivity suite that would enhance employee efficiency and add new collaboration features. The mailbox size has since gone up from 50 MB to 200 MB. This has resulted in productivity increase and time saving in managing the mailbox for employees while in office and also while traveling.

Integration and collaboration with Outlook 2010 makes it easy to use with a familiar and simple user interface. Administrators too, benefit from a unified solution that is easy to deploy and manage.

The next step was to upgrade to SharePoint Server 2010. This enables content,

“With the audio or video conferencing facility, we have observed that besides saving on travel costs by up to 20 percent, we also save time by up to 50 percent.”

Venkatesh Natarajan, Special Director – IT, Ashok Leyland Ltd

document and ideas sharing, and organizes teams to get the work done and track what other team members are working on. SharePoint for SAP Surround makes core SAP data easily available for business users to work with. It simplifies complex SAP interfaces, enabling users to interact with business workflow processes, be more effective, and ensure high performance. For example, complicated Travel Expense Statement is a simple form in Outlook, which uploads the information to SAP via SharePoint portal.

In July 2012, Ashok Leyland opted for Microsoft Lync Server, a unified communication platform for instant messaging, conferencing and connecting people across the organization. “The solution seamlessly integrates with Microsoft Office and other existing Microsoft tools and systems,” states P Ramamoorthy, Deputy General Manager – IT, Ashok Leyland. “More importantly, it connects remote employees. Also, employees who are traveling can use it over the internet or even via smart phone.”

The organization is exploring the telephony features and is all set to integrate its PSTN network with Lync by early 2013. Users would then be able to access powerful voice features, whether in the office or at home, from phones, PCs, laptops and desktop applications, bringing down the communication costs.

The company is also exploring options such as remote management, trouble shooting and employee training using Lync. Ashok Leyland builds on the collaboration culture with the latest technologies. And to ensure adoption of the platform, its IT department worked with the Corporate Communications team to launch an internal awareness campaign on India’s Independence Day, 15 August 2012. Using

independence as its theme, the campaign aimed to maximize usage by highlighting the benefits of Lync to employees, which included freedom from traveling long distances for face-to-face meetings.

### Benefits

By developing integrated communication and a collaboration platform, employees connect in new ways, any time, from virtually anywhere using multiple smart devices to boost efficiency and save time.

### Better Communication and Collaboration

Ashok Leyland’s employees are using instant messaging and conferencing to boost efficiency by reducing the time spent in travel for meetings. For example, for the monthly quality review meeting, the quality managers from all the manufacturing plants traveled to Chennai. With factories spread out in remote locations it would take people at least a day to get to Chennai and back. With Lync, however, these meetings ensure communication, without losing the experience of a real meeting. Managers are able to share presentations and statistics, and best practices using desktop sharing. “The output and delivery of meetings is similar to face-to-face meetings”, says Venkatesh Natarajan, Special Director – IT, Ashok Leyland.

Employees can also send instant messages to individual members or to groups in the contact list. “Now distance is not a constraint for face-to-face meetings. With Lync, we are able to collaborate with our colleagues in overseas countries too”, says P Ramamoorthy, Deputy General Manager – IT, Ashok Leyland.

### **Improves Productivity, with Comfort Level**

"Microsoft Lync, Exchange Server and SharePoint Server offer the latest unified communication infrastructure to our organization, setting the stage for future growth. Employees collaborate, share information, and coordinate their efforts in real time. Earlier, we repeatedly attempted to reach each other via phone or emails, due to lack of visibility into others availability or presence," recalls P Ramamoorthy. "Now with the presence and status indicator, we know exactly when and where to connect. This is extremely beneficial when we need to coordinate across offices for a critical business discussion or time-sensitive decision."

Additionally, with web conferencing, e-meetings are organized in a matter of minutes. Likewise, audio/video calls can be scheduled in advance or be spontaneous ad hoc interactions. In each case, productivity increases.

With Exchange Server 2010, employees have seamless access to messaging tools and data from a single inbox. Microsoft Lync along with Microsoft Exchange and SharePoint Server together enhance the productivity of the organization by 20 percent. "Collaboration centers around Microsoft Outlook, a familiar tool, delivering higher productivity," says Venkatesh Natarajan, Special Director – IT, Ashok Leyland.

### **Provides Cost Savings**

With rich and engaging communications across and outside the organization, expensive business travel and communications costs are reduced. But the big savings come from the boost in productivity. Teams from different locations e-meet for review meetings. Moreover, Lync will soon integrate and then replace

the traditional PBX system in a phased manner. "With the audio or video conferencing facility, we have observed that besides saving on travel costs by up to 20 percent, we also save time by up to 50 percent," states Venkatesh Natarajan.

### **Tracks and Monitors Communication**

A complete archive is available to track and monitor the communication. In case of a system crash, the team can easily recapture data from the archives. Microsoft also facilitates the management to track usage and ensure that the team is using it effectively to ensure maximum return on investment. "We see significant improvement in business efficiencies, and faster responses along with lower costs of ownership," concludes Venkatesh Natarajan.

## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers in the United States and Canada who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:

[www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

For more information about Ashok Leyland products and services, call (91) (44) (2220 6000) or visit the website at:

[www.ashokleyland.com](http://www.ashokleyland.com)

## Microsoft Office System

The Microsoft Office system is the business world's chosen environment for information work, providing the programs, servers, and services that help you succeed by transforming information into impact.

For more information about the Microsoft Office system, go to:

[www.microsoft.com/office](http://www.microsoft.com/office)

## Software and Services

- Microsoft Office 2010
- Microsoft Exchange Server 2010
- Microsoft Lync Server 2010
- Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010