

# Lync 2013 Customer Solution Case Study



## Bridgestone Drives Costs Down and Improves Agility with Voice Solution



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Graham Burkin, Infrastructure and Support Manager,  
Bridgestone Australia

### Overview

**Country or Region:** Australia

**Industry:** Manufacturing

### Customer Profile

Bridgestone Australia, headquartered in Adelaide, Australia, is a subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation—the largest tyre manufacturer in the world.

### Business Situation

Bridgestone relied on an aging phone system and email for the majority of its communications. This led to high costs for phone communications and slow business processes.

### Solution

Bridgestone deployed Microsoft Lync Server 2013 to replace its aging private-branch exchange systems and provide instant messaging, presence, and conferencing capabilities to speed communications.

### Benefits

- Reduced costs for telephony
- More agile business processes
- Improved business relationships
- More efficient sales efforts
- Reduced costs for travel

With employees located across Australia and New Zealand, Bridgestone Australia wanted to improve its communications capabilities to speed business processes and develop stronger relationships among employees. The company depended on email and phone conversations for the vast majority of its communications and wanted to provide employees with better options for real-time communications. It also had problems with its private-branch exchange systems and needed a new voice solution. Bridgestone chose to deploy Microsoft Lync Server 2013 for voice, conferencing, and instant messaging and presence. The solution has delivered more agile business processes, reduced costs for telephony and travel, and improved sales.



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## Situation

Bridgestone Australia is a subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation, the largest tyre manufacturer in the world. The company is a major supplier to the Australian automotive industry, providing an extensive range of quality tyres, carefully developed to suit local conditions. The company has more than 1,500 employees across Australia and New Zealand.

Bridgestone has a very distributed workforce with 40 company-owned sites in Australia and about 90 locations in New Zealand. Teams also generally have members from more than one location. With a distributed workforce, employees were not always sure about the location of staff members.

Most Bridgestone staff members require reliable mobile connectivity, particularly executives who travel overseas and sales staff who travel across the country. Sometimes salespeople make trips up to seven hours to support franchisees in remote locations. Bridgestone operates a few call centres in Australia and New Zealand that have special communications needs. It uses Zeacom Communications Center to support those operations.

Most employees at Bridgestone used the phone and email to communicate, and occasionally they used conferencing. "Our core communications offerings were landlines, mobile phones, and email," says Graham Burkin, Infrastructure and Support Manager for Bridgestone Australia. "They were completely disjointed."

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resources required were not always available. "Any changes we wanted to implement were costly because we had to make them at each location," says Burkin. "Because of the system's age, the configuration was not very stable and even small changes sometimes resulted in big problems."

Bridgestone used audio conferencing services to host conference calls. The services worked well but were expensive. The company also installed videoconferencing equipment at many of the offices. These units were very popular and could not meet the demand for daily videoconferencing needs. The company did not have a web

conferencing service, and employees frequently asked the IT staff for access to Skype and similar software to meet this need.

To better support its distributed workforce, Bridgestone began to evaluate unified communications solutions from a few vendors. It wanted a solution that could replace its aging phone system and provide for all of the company's conferencing needs. It also wanted to increase collaboration by adding instant messaging and presence to the communications options provided to its staff. Another requirement for the solution was certification for the Zeacom solution and tight integration for its call centre agents.

## Solution

Bridgestone chose to deploy Microsoft Lync Server 2013, which provides a unified solution for instant messaging, presence, meetings, and voice. Bridgestone was impressed with the Microsoft Lync 2013 client. It liked the ease of use that the client provided, and it also liked the interoperability with other Microsoft products, such as Microsoft Office, Microsoft Exchange Server, and Microsoft SharePoint Server.

### Voice

Bridgestone has deployed the enterprise voice capabilities at its Head Office. By adding company phone numbers to its global address list (GAL), it can now use the Lync click-to-call functionality. It also uses response groups to provide team answering functionality outside of its call centres. Response Groups offer delegated management so that the people who are in the group can manage the settings. Response groups also serve as a backup solution to the Zeacom call centre solution. The company especially likes the language capabilities for the response group menus, so it can set up messages in English and Japanese, which is handy for a Japanese-owned company.

To support voice calls for its employees, Bridgestone has deployed Polycom CX600 IP phones. "We have gained a lot of features by deploying the Polycom CX600. Our employees like the speakerphone and the way the phone can sync presence information with the Lync client," says Adam Gjorgjievski, IT Communications Specialist at Bridgestone Australia.

Some of the company's employees prefer headsets, and Bridgestone has provided them with a wide selection of Jabra headsets. "The voice quality on the Jabra headsets is great, and we like having so many different models to choose from so that employees can find a design that meets their needs," says Gjorgjievski.

Bridgestone uses a NET UX1000 gateway in Adelaide, Australia, to connect Lync to the public-switched telephony network (PSTN) from the data centre. It has also deployed the UX1000 as a survivable branch appliance (SBA) at several smaller offices. The SBA is based on cost-effective media gateways hosting the Microsoft Survivable Branch Appliance software package. The SBA

provides a PSTN connection in the event of wide area network failure.

When Bridgestone deploys Lync Server 2013 in New Zealand, it plans to use Lync for least cost routing between Australia and New Zealand. By routing calls between Lync servers over its network, Bridgestone will avoid international toll charges for calls between the two countries.

### Conferencing

Because the videoconferencing capabilities at Bridgestone were limited at most sites to one conference room per site, many teams could not use the service as often as they would have liked. "With Lync 2013, our employees can attend videoconferences from wherever they are," says Gjorgjievski. "We deployed Microsoft LifeCam web cameras and our employees really appreciate the HD [high-definition] multiparty video and great sound quality."

Beyond video, employees have quickly adopted the desktop sharing feature in Lync to facilitate collaboration and problem solving throughout the company. Employees can also choose to

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only share an application to conserve bandwidth and maintain the privacy of their desktop.

To facilitate calls with external stakeholders, Bridgestone has deployed audio conferencing dial-in numbers. Rather than paying for a third-party

audio conferencing service, Bridgestone can now use Lync to host the calls and integrate the audio from Lync connections and the dial-in calls into one meeting. External participants can use the Microsoft Lync Web App, which allows them to join a meeting and receive full audio, video, and desktop sharing capabilities through the browser.

### Instant Messaging and Presence

"While we were definitely interested in enterprise voice, we were also excited about introducing instant messaging and presence to the business," says Burkin. With presence information, teams can see who is available at any given time. "We often played phone tag because we didn't have visibility into each other's presence," says Gjorgjievski. "Presence is especially helpful for our salespeople, who are frequently on the road. Lync and Lync Mobile are integral to broadcast their availability and receive communications throughout the day."

The availability of the Lync contact card, a dynamic card that displays a contact's high-resolution photo, their presence, status note, location, and organisational details, in other Microsoft Office

products is also helpful. Now when employees receive an email, they can initiate a chat or voice call directly from the email message.

Federation with other companies using Lync and with other instant messaging services like Skype will be useful for Bridgestone. Lync federation makes communication with vendors such as Data3, Datacom, and Microsoft easier.

### Benefits

The initial reaction to the Lync Server 2013 deployment at Bridgestone has been overwhelmingly positive. By deploying Lync with enterprise voice, conferencing, and instant messaging and presence, Bridgestone has benefitted from cost reductions, improved business processes, and better employee relationships.

### Reducing Costs

One of the primary drivers for the Lync project was the cost and difficulty of maintaining the existing PBX equipment at Bridgestone. Moving to a centrally managed Lync deployment has alleviated this issue and reduced the company's maintenance budget. Implementing least cost routing to avoid toll charges on calls between Australia and New Zealand will also have a large budget impact.

By using Lync 2013, Bridgestone employees and contractors can avoid travel. "Instead of traveling for meetings, we are holding more videoconferences by using Lync," says Gjorgjievski. "With contractors, we can avoid being billed for the cost of travel and travel time."

Lync meetings also help to reduce calling charges for employees when they do travel. "We had a manager travel to Japan recently and he needed some help from his team to update a PowerPoint presentation," says Gjorgjievski. "Instead of using his mobile phone and having a difficult time collaborating, he used Lync with voice and desktop sharing to quickly get the input he needed."

### Improving Business Agility

Bridgestone is using Lync Server 2013 to improve business processes. "We are doing a big ERP project right now and have consultants and staff from many offices working together," says Gjorgjievski. "They use Lync to share their desktops and work out implementation issues remotely."

The service desk always found it difficult to hold meetings, because they always had to be available to answer calls. Now they have started using group conversations instead. "Everyone can now participate in the meeting and still be at their desk taking calls," says Burkin. "Lync instant messaging is a great way to multitask." The service desk staff can also use instant messaging to reach out to subject matter experts while they are on the phone with customers to get an immediate answer to a question.

### Fostering Relationships

Through Lync 2013, Bridgestone employees can easily find colleagues and connect with them. "The Lync presence indicators help me every day just by indicating when someone comes online so I can contact them right away," says Burkin. By viewing presence information, employees also know when not to call someone, because people work across many time zones.

By using the Lync contact card, employees are more familiar with one another. With so many offices, colleagues rarely see each other in person but, using the contact card, they can see each other's pictures. "With the HD profile photos and multiparty videoconferencing, we are developing a greater sense of community," says Burkin. The contact card also displays the company reporting structure, so employees can see where a colleague fits in the organisation.

After Bridgestone employees have determined someone is available, they have many ways to connect with each other. "I love click-to-call. It's easy and I can initiate the call from the application I'm already in. It's truly just one click," says Burkin. "Once a chat or call is in progress, I can just drag in other people if we need another viewpoint." Employees can also easily switch communications from instant messaging to voice to video to desktop sharing as the conversation changes.

"I can easily connect with others, and they can easily connect with me," says Burkin. "I can divert my calls to my mobile phone or to a delegate and, with Lync Mobile, I can let people know I am available even when I'm out of the office."

### Improving Sales Efforts

The sales force has a lot of area to cover and spends most of its time out of the office. Lync Server 2013 provides some unique benefits for this team. They regularly update the franchisees that sell Bridgestone tyres, often traveling from store to store. With the Skype federation, Bridgestone expects the sales team can use Lync 2013 to talk with the stores through their Skype clients.

The sales team is also under a lot of pressure to provide answers to questions quickly. "Our salespeople need to be responsive to their customers," says Burkin. "With the Lync Mobile client on their Windows Phones, they are able to see who is available and send them a quick instant message or give them a call. They no longer waste time leaving voice mail for people who aren't available."

## Microsoft Lync Server 2013

Microsoft Lync Server 2013 ushers in a new connected user experience that transforms every communication into an interaction that is more collaborative and engaging—and that is accessible from anywhere. For IT, the benefits are equally powerful, with a highly secure and reliable communications system that works with existing tools and systems for easier management, lower cost of ownership, smoother deployment and migration, and greater choice and flexibility.

For more information about Microsoft Lync Server 2013, go to: [www.microsoft.com/lync](http://www.microsoft.com/lync)

## Jabra

Jabra offers a complete portfolio of corded and wireless devices that are “optimised” for Lync. These devices are tested by Microsoft and built to offer a rich and integrated experience for Lync users. Jabra enables users to derive the full business productivity, efficiency, and cost benefits they expect from Lync through enhanced voice collaboration based on device simplicity, reliability, and ease of use.

For more information about Jabra devices tested and qualified for Lync, visit: [www.jabra.com](http://www.jabra.com)

## Microsoft Hardware

Microsoft Hardware provides quality solutions for customers looking for fewer vendors. Microsoft Hardware webcams feature High Definition and True Colour for true-to-life colour and exposure management. Microsoft Hardware headsets deliver clear, acoustically accurate sound, have a noise-cancellation boom microphone, and in-line call controls. All Lync Certified Products are supported by Microsoft Premier Support, come with industry standard warranties, and cost less than \$99.

For more information about Microsoft Hardware devices tested and qualified for Lync, visit: [www.microsoft.com/hardware/en-us](http://www.microsoft.com/hardware/en-us)

## Polycom

Polycom solutions optimised for Microsoft Lync provide unified, intuitive collaboration solutions that allow individuals and groups to instantly see, hear, and speak with colleagues around the world. The result is improved collaboration; streamlined operations; and faster, more informed decisions. Polycom provides comprehensive voice and video collaboration solutions for Microsoft Lync with more than 40 different solutions—from USB/IP/wireless phones to desktop video, to immersive room-based systems.

For more information about Polycom solutions tested and qualified for Lync, visit: [www.polycom.com/microsoft](http://www.polycom.com/microsoft)

### Software and Services

- Microsoft Office
  - Microsoft Lync 2013
  - Microsoft Outlook 2010
- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
  - Microsoft Lync Server 2013
  - Microsoft Exchange Server 2010
  - Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010

### Hardware

- NET UX1000 SIP Gateway

### Partners

- NET
- Jabra
- Polycom
- Microsoft Hardware



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2. For more information about Bridgestone Australia products and services, call 08 8206 0200 or visit the website at: [www.bridgestone.com.au](http://www.bridgestone.com.au)

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