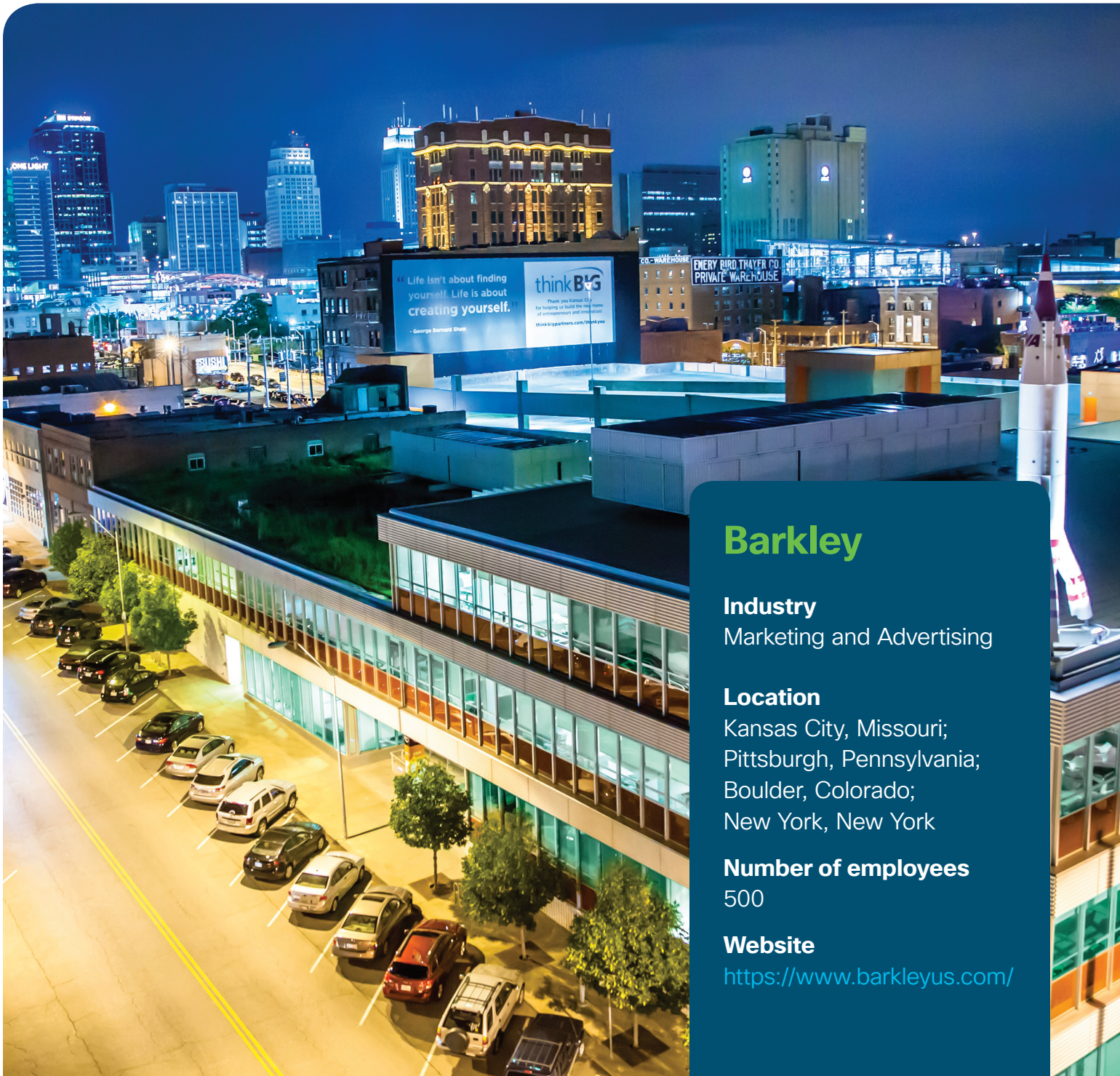


Barkley Finds a Foundation for Success with Cisco



Barkley

Industry

Marketing and Advertising

Location

Kansas City, Missouri;
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania;
Boulder, Colorado;
New York, New York

Number of employees

500

Website

<https://www.barkleyus.com/>

Challenge: Creating an Easy-to-Manage Infrastructure

Barkley, headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, is the world's largest employee-owned idea company. The thriving marketing and advertising agency, with additional offices in New York, Pittsburgh, and Boulder, focuses on increasing clients' revenue by partnering, analyzing, and solving product and business challenges through creative strategies and inventive campaigns. Founded in 1964, Barkley has grown to nearly 500 employees and a network of 402 partners across the United States.

Barkley is at the forefront of marketing and advertising innovation, but the company's leadership knew there was a better way to align its technology and business units to drive greater success.

"When I arrived at Barkley, I immediately assessed our technology infrastructure," said Lambert Tomeldan, head of IT at Barkley. "It hadn't been updated in 10 years. Previous teams had just been adding to what was already there to fit short-term needs instead of developing a long-term road map."

The problem wasn't only the aging infrastructure. Tomeldan quickly realized that Barkley's IT team of five, including himself, was overextended trying to manage disparate solutions. After years of short-term IT planning, Barkley's infrastructure included products from 10 different technology vendors.

"It was an unwieldy mix of technology," said Jason McKanna, Barkley's Cisco account manager. "Barkley needed a way to simplify its infrastructure that also accommodated future growth and ensured the security of their client data."

Tomeldan was also concerned about the company's lack of a disaster recovery solution and frequent employee complaints that wireless access was unreliable. After completing his assessments, he brought his IT plan to Barkley's leadership. Upgrading the network and implementing a disaster recovery solution were at the top of his list.

Solution: One Vendor That Can Do It All

Once Tomeldan explained that shifting the company's technology strategy to focus on long-term value and growth would improve business results, Barkley leadership



agreed to his proposal. Tomeldan knew the first step was upgrading Barkley's network. That would provide the foundation for future projects to improve the company's data center, security, and collaboration technologies. To help him find the right solution that could be managed by his small IT team, he turned to Cisco.

"I have a five-person IT team, including me. We could never be experts in all of the vendors we were using," Tomeldan said. "I reached out to Cisco to help us build a scalable infrastructure that would grow with us."

To help Tomeldan determine which solutions would meet Barkley's needs, Cisco partner Alexander Open Systems, a ConvergeOne Company (AOS) completed additional IT assessments. They determined that Cisco Meraki and Nexus solutions would help the company achieve their network upgrade goals. Cisco HyperFlex was recommended to address Tomeldan's disaster recovery and compute concerns.

"Cisco is a great fit for Barkley because they cover everything," said Tanner Gardner, account manager at AOS. "They provide high-quality compute, network, meet, and security solutions, which is ideal for companies with few IT staff because the products interoperate—they work together in a way that delivers better results for customers than if used alone."



Tomeldan agreed, and Barkley began planning the network upgrade. Nexus 9300 switches were deployed in the company's data center to improve network performance for business units that require high bandwidth, such as Barkley's video department. To improve the quality of internet and wireless access for Barkley employees, Tomeldan knew he needed additional help. The company's Kansas City headquarters is located in a concrete building, and radio interference meant that employees frequently lost wireless access on their devices. To ensure proper signal saturation of the Barkley office, a Meraki expert in San Francisco helped Tomeldan and AOS design a blueprint for installing Cisco Meraki MR53 wireless access points. In total, 20 access points and more than three dozen Cisco Meraki MS 350 and MS425 switches were installed in a design similar to the one used in the Meraki headquarters.

To address Barkley's disaster recovery and compute challenges, the company needed to overhaul their existing data center solution. Cisco HyperFlex met Tomeldan's needs for an easy-to-manage, high-performance, and scalable data center.

"I was impressed by how fast and easy it was to set up a HyperFlex system," said Tomeldan. "What was also important was that HyperFlex didn't require a compute engineer or a data center engineer to manage. So instead of focusing on granular IT roles, my team can focus on being a partner to our business units."

Results: More Productive Employees. Happier Clients.

The results of Barkley's network upgrade were immediate. According to Tomeldan, the company went from experiencing daily wireless outages to zero, and the new network delivered a 100% improvement in reliability and a 250% increase in speed. Employees noticed they no longer lost access as they moved around the office, and with this solution, production teams were more efficient due to a decrease in file sharing and project development speeds.



Solutions

Switching and Routing

- Cisco Meraki Switches
- Cisco Nexus Series Switches
- Cisco Catalyst Series Switches

Wireless

- Cisco Meraki Access Points and Switches

Data Center

- Cisco HyperFlex Platform
- Cisco Unified Computing System

Unified Communications and Collaboration

- Cisco desktop and conference room IP phones
- Cisco Webex Teams
- Cisco Webex Meetings
- Cisco Webex Board

Productivity instantly improved, and Barkley shortly rolled out the Meraki upgrade in their Pittsburgh and Boulder offices.

The shift to Cisco solutions, which are easy to use and manage, also allowed Tomeldan to reimagine his IT team, a move that resulted in a 40% productivity increase across his staff.

“We are now able to embrace a dev ops model across the business,” Tomeldan said. “I don’t have a dedicated network engineer. I don’t have someone who can stare at firewall scans all day. These technologies allow us to do more with the resources we have.”

Due to the success of Barkley’s network upgrade and disaster recovery projects, the company recently began a complete refresh of their voice, meetings, and video solutions. Not surprisingly, they chose Cisco IP phones and Webex technologies.

After Barkley replaced an end-of-life competitor phone solution with Cisco Webex Teams, utilizing Cisco Webex Room Kits, Webex Room Kits Plus, Cisco 7841 IP phones, and 7832 IP conference phones, employees across the enterprise immediately noticed an improvement in quality and reliability. Cisco Webex Teams also provided a new way for Barkley employees to collaborate around the world and reduce travel expenses. Video calls are now incorporated into cross-location meetings, and Barkley successfully implemented a Webex Room Kit at one of their client headquarters to facilitate better collaboration and idea generation while saving travel costs. Barkley is now incorporating the use of Webex Room Kits as part of its client collaboration offerings and process, further distinguishing the company from competitors. Barkley’s leadership also noticed. The company’s CEO and COO both take frequent meetings while traveling, and told Tomeldan they are impressed with the clarity and convenience of a Cisco Webex Meetings call.

Even after a successful network and data center rollout, Tomeldan is taking his time to ensure the collaboration refresh meets the needs of his organization.

“We need to do this purposefully so it makes sense for what each person at Barkley does,” Tomeldan said. “You know, a lot of companies don’t realize that Cisco has solutions for small businesses. But I knew Cisco and Jason had my back throughout this project. They are part of my family now.”

Learn More

To discover how Cisco solutions can help your business improve business outcomes and deliver exceptional customer experiences, visit: <http://www.cisco.com/go/smb>



Results

- Reduced server and VM management by 60% by upgrading 10-year-old network and data center infrastructure to flexible, secure, and scalable solutions
- New Cisco Meraki wireless network improved reliability 100% and eliminated daily outages
- Simplified, easy-to-manage solutions maximized value of small, five-person IT team
- Replaced multiple network and data center vendors with Cisco, reducing IT complexity while delivering a superior employee experience