# Qenos

*Digital Transformation at Qenos Delivers Substantial Business Efficiencies*

Data#3 | Qenos

# Data#3

**Qenos**

## Objective

Qenos sought a unified communications solution that would enable digital transformation of its ageing systems and create efficiencies to drive better user experience across the business.

## Benefits

- **Simplified management**
- **Enhanced security**
- **Improved performance**
- **Vendor warranty coverage and support from Data#3's maintenance team**
- **Ability to support working remotely**
- **Improved collaboration and efficient work practices**
- **Reduced risk of technology failure**
- **Meeting stringent budget requirements**

## Highlight

**The reliability of technology was important, and the biggest benefit to Qenos is that staff have confidence that the technology they are using will be reliable both in the office and when they work from home.**

## Approach

Having enlisted Data#3's help to address previous technology challenges, the Qenos Information Systems team was confident the right skill and experience was available to deliver a successful outcome for this project. Given Data#3's knowledge of the organisation's existing systems, along with its Cisco Gold Partner status, Qenos agreed to work solely with Data#3 on the project.

## Solutions & Services

- ☑ **Cisco Unified Communications Manager**
- ☑ **Cisco Collaboration Flex plan**
- ☑ **Cisco Secure**
- ☑ **Professional Services**

## Testimonial

**"Data#3's greatest strengths were their partnerships with Cisco, and the technical resources they could apply – they are very technically gifted, and their current knowledge means they know the answers."**

**Jonathan Guy, Infrastructure Team Leader, Qenos.**

> "Data#3 made it their business to know what we are, what we do, what our systems are, and how they have been built over a number of years."

**Justin James**
**Procurement Category Manager, Qenos**

## The Background

As the only Australian manufacturer of high quality polyethylene, Qenos is a key partner for resin manufacturers. They provide the building blocks for products that play a large part in our daily lives, from the containers used to pour our milk, to the bins we wheel to the kerb.

In the manufacturing sector, keeping costs low is key, so all expenditure is carefully assessed. When it was demonstrated that the cost of inefficient technology and the risk of failure was unsustainable, Qenos sought maximum business value from updating its communications infrastructure.

## The Challenge

In a highly cost-driven industry, a reliance on old technology was causing frustration and limiting users as they went about their daily tasks. Ageing hardware meant the Qenos team was more reactive than Qenos Infrastructure Team Leader, Jonathan Guy, would like.

*"We were relying on failing technology, old switches, and old PABX systems. The business was using old infrastructure, which was inefficient, prone to issues, and presented possible security concerns to the business,"* explained Guy.

*"We had talked about a solution with Data#3 for a long time, and this reached critical mass when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and we needed to rely more than ever on technology. Problems can be exposed if there is a crisis: in our case, the primary challenge during COVID-19 was enabling our people to work from home."*

The ageing infrastructure, much of it more than a decade old, was reaching end of vendor warranty support. Any outage could impact the business and cause a loss of revenue.

*"We track the rate of failure, and had noticed that over the last 12-18 months, our edge switches were failing at an increasing rate. We ensure we have spares to swap out, because in our business environment, we don't have the option to be exposed."*

For the Infrastructure team, the efforts of supporting dated equipment meant they had less time to proactively improve efficiency for staff. The equipment was inflexible, and difficult to maintain. Embarking on a digital transformation from such a starting point was a massive undertaking, but essential to supporting users as they go about their tasks.

Of all the ageing equipment, it was perhaps the phone system that impacted many users the most directly according to Qenos Procurement Category Manager, Justin James, who worked closely with Guy on aligning the project to the needs of the business. As users are more accustomed to the convenience and efficiency of being contactable on-the-go outside work, fixed PABX phones, with few capabilities beyond voice calls, were a barrier to mobility.

*"We were heavily dependent on our old copper network and aged PABX system. We were the second-last organisation in Australia to maintain one which meant our people were more tied to their desks,"* said James.

**"Data#3 had a good awareness of how we operate, and our requirements, and the presales work that went into the project helped to make it deliverable."**

**Jonathan Guy,
Infrastructure Team Leader, Qenos.**

## IT Outcome

During previous projects, Data#3 had demonstrated a commitment to the success of Qenos, and invested time to learn about the business and technology environment. This familiarity and insight was important.

*"Data#3 had a good awareness of how we operate, and our requirements, and the presales work that went into the project helped to make it deliverable,"* said Guy.

An initial project proposal was devised, but when industry pressures, amplified by COVID-19, put the squeeze on costs still further, it was necessary to rethink some elements. While many activities were put on hold, the essential nature of the technology update meant that the business approved progress with strict requirements that needed to be met.

*"From a commercial perspective, we are a cyclical business, so our income depends on what the market is dictating on polyethylene. We review all expenditures, and where we allocate dollars, the most important actions must take priority,"* explained James.

*"This wasn't something we could walk into with our eyes closed, as cost pressures were significant. We investigated the necessary requirements to progress, and had several meetings with Data#3, where we used this information to reconfigure the project to something more digestible for our senior management team. Together, we identified specific requirements and targets to be achieved."*

The resulting proposal was an all-encompassing program of works, including a PABX replacement, and moving most analogue handsets to Cisco Unified Communications Manager (Call Manager). Cisco's Collaboration Flex Plan brings together cloud and on-premises collaboration in a single package. A complete core and edge network upgrade was rolled out across the two Qenos sites, leading to greatly improved network performance and easier management.

*"Meraki is also easier to manage than the enterprise products we were used to,"* commented Guy.

Security was also in line for a comprehensive overhaul to better protect the business. The Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) estimates an average of 164 cybercrime reports are made by Australians every day, this equates to about one report every ten minutes[1]. With a transition to remote working due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the attention to security was timely. A range of Cisco security software was installed, including a next-generation firewall, Cisco Umbrella, and Cisco Secure (formerly Email Security), all integrating to give greater visibility and simplified management. This cohesive approach makes it easier for the Qenos team to track its licensing needs and ensure the right coverage. Much of the infrastructure was pre-staged on Data#3's premises, making the roll-out simpler and less disruptive to Qenos staff.

*"The management portal is web-based, so we can work from anywhere. Reliability was very important to us, so the biggest benefit has been that we now have reliable technology that we have faith in. We are licensed appropriately, and have the right technology for the end users we support. This is chalk and cheese compared to where we were,"* outlined Guy.

"The professionalism consistently displayed by Data#3 was key in getting the project delivered in consultation with us."

**Jonathan Guy,
Infrastructure Team Leader, Qenos.**

## Business Outcome

Among Data#3's strengths, according to Guy, was a strong relationship with Cisco, and an awareness of the many financing options available. This capability put the comprehensive technology update within reach.

*"The established relationships that Data#3 has with Cisco played a significant part from a commercial perspective. They are able to get the best deals with Cisco, so those strong networks had a major influence,"* said James.

*"The relationship was also very important when we identified a couple of opportunities after the procurement process deal was done, and we wanted to migrate to Cisco Umbrella, and migrate our Email Security. Data#3 was able to go in afterwards and get the right pricing for us, they were very flexible."*

While the IT team and business leaders are reassured to have dependable technology in place, resulting in a substantial risk reduction, for most users, the benefit is in increased mobility, access to modern collaboration applications, and the ability to work from home.

*"It was very old technology that we were relying on. Now 95% of users have VoIP instead of relying on a PABX, they use headsets now, and can move around while remaining connected. Although we still have 5% of our old copper network in-place for specific operational needs,"* said Guy.

When lockdowns prompted a sudden shift to working from home, rapid adjustments had to be made by the Qenos team as the business supported Australian organisations through monumental changes. Here, too, Data#3 was able to work with Qenos and Cisco to enable the workforce to collaborate.

*"Working from home meant we now had a reliance on Cisco Webex, where we previously had a limited on-premises license for only a few people. Data#3 enabled us to leverage a Cisco Webex Cloud Services trial. This was beneficial to the business as it meant during a transition period we didn't lose the services we had grown reliant on,"* recounted James.

*"The feedback was definitely positive around Cisco Webex and Cisco Call Manager, especially among our knowledge worker base. It was very quickly adopted, people are not tied to desks."*

## Conclusion

For Guy and James, it was important that Qenos had a strong alignment of business and technology, and this meant understanding the organisation's characteristics well. Reliability and durability were more important than rushing to bleeding edge technologies, although the solution paves the way to introduce new applications and services in the future.

*"We are happy with the knowledge that we are moving forward, upgrading to more capable systems. In the blink of an eye, everyone was working from home, which required that solid foundational infrastructure,"* explained Guy.

With the luxury of more time, James said that more staff training on the new collaboration tools would have been an advantage.

*"Most adapted quickly, but change is always tough for some."*

The choice to work with a single provider paid off for Qenos, especially when embarking on a major technology overhaul punctuated by a global pandemic.

*"Data#3 made it their business to know what we are, what we do, what our systems are, and how they have been built over a number of years. Both of our organisations worked hand in hand. This played a significant part in their quickly understanding our complexities and our issues with existing infrastructure. The professionalism consistently displayed by Data#3 was key in getting the project delivered in consultation with us,"* said Guy.

For James, too, that sense of partnership was indicative of the way the Qenos and Data#3 teams worked together, along with Cisco, towards a common goal.

*"Data#3's greatest strengths were their partnerships with Cisco, and the technical resources they could apply – they are very technically gifted, and their current knowledge means they know the answers. It was good to see their level of focus on us. Their management took an ongoing interest and attended regular meetings, and our account manager was always available to handle concerns. The team was flexible and focused,"* concluded James.

*"Engaging Data#3 as a sole provider in this project illustrates our trust in them."*

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**Justin James**
**Procurement Category Manager**
**Qenos.**

## Data#3 and Cisco

As a Cisco Gold and Master Specialised Partner, Data#3's relationship with Cisco has grown progressively over more than 20 years. During this time, Data#3 has become one of Cisco's largest partner in Asia Pacific with significant capacity throughout Australia and the capability to deliver business outcomes using Cisco's technology.

Through a committed partnership, our technical team has developed deep expertise across Cisco's portfolio, giving Data#3 an edge when it comes to navigating the complexity of the digital era and solving your business challenges with the best technology solutions.

**Data#3** | **CISCO** Partner