

Aozora Bank

Cloud Calling Optimized for Hybrid Work Webex Calling

Under the medium-term management plan “AOZORA 2022” covering the three fiscal years beginning from FY2020, Aozora Bank added a new cloud calling system Webex Calling to its existing VoIP platform built with Cisco Unified Communications Manager. The Bank is working to optimise its communication platform for business transformation, and to adopt hybrid work in the age of new normal.

Products and services

- Webex Calling
- Webex Meetings
- Webex Devices (Room Kit Plus / DX Series)
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Professional Services

Solution

- Flexible options allowed users to choose phone numbers and calling plans freely, and BYOD reduced the operational load and cost of managing terminals
- A phased migration to the cloud and seamless integration with Webex Meetings and other devices
- Personalized settings helped employees adopt the BYOD policy without the concern of overwork

Challenges

- The procurement cost of business smartphones and the high workload of managing the terminals prevented the Bank from adopting remote work on a greater scale
- Fixed Mobile Convergence (FMC) services do not allow remote workers to access the full features of the office IP phones

Results and the future

- The bank installed the system for those departments based on the feature briefing and the survey feedback.
- A transition from FMC to Web Calling is scheduled to be completed in 2021.



Tomoyuki Yamada
Managing Executive Officer
Chief Technology Officer
Aozora Bank

Tomoyuki Yamada, *Managing Executive Officer & Chief Technology Officer*, explains Aozora Bank's goal and its execution plan. "AOZORA2022' is a three-year action plan for us to become a unique Partner Bank in Japan, aiming to provide new value-added financial services and contribute to the development of society. In order to achieve innovations through digital transformation (DX) in the respective segments by working together with regional financial institutions, and enhance the quality of consulting services provided to individual customers, corporations, and financial institutions, and offer products created with innovative ideas by leveraging the expertise, agility, and flexibility, we believe that our growth will be accelerated by going digital and collaborating with others across divisions and corporations. Communication is more important than ever before."

Challenges



Shunsuke Kimura
Infrastructure Management Division
System Integration Group III
Manager
Aozora Bank

Shunsuke Kimura, *Manager of System Integration Group III, Infrastructure Management Division*, explains how this project had begun. "In addition to a substantial increase in the number of people working from home to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the financial industry's environment is changing in various ways, making the industry adopt a new method of communication supporting the business. We have been using Cisco IP phones with Cisco Unified Communications Manager deployed on-premises. Since we relocated our head office in 2017, we have made vigorous efforts in upgrading our communication platforms by distributing roughly 800 units of business smartphones to divisions that have employees going out of the office often, such as the Sales Division, and by connecting the smartphones to the internal network as part of the FMC (Fixed Mobile Convergence) process and using Webex devices with Webex Meetings. However, the procurement and maintenance cost of the business smartphones as well as the high workload of managing the terminals prevented us from adopting remote work on a greater scale. The conventional method also had limitations, as the remote workers cannot access the full features of the office IP phones through the FMC service."

While seeking a communication platform optimal for the hybrid workstyle where all the employees get to work remotely, the Bank learned about what Cisco's Webex Calling can do. Kimura explains the reason for choosing Webex Calling "it's not been a while since Webex Calling was released and there were not many use cases in Japan at that point, but Cisco explained about their professional services and how they can help resolve our current issues by integrating them with our existing environment. The services seemed like a solution for the challenges we've had and an ideal telephone platform with advanced features, eliminating the constraints on the lines and locations. We've been working with Cisco and have confidence in what they do, so instead of waiting to see what other companies' DX strategies will turn out, we decided to kick start to get the benefits as an early adopter."

“Our growth will be accelerated by going digital and collaborating as a team across divisions and corporations. We are renewing our communication platform in this project to accomplish this.”

Tomoyuki Yamada
Managing Executive Officer & Chief Technology Officer Aozora Bank

Solution

Webex Calling is a full-featured, enterprise-grade cloud calling and team collaboration solution available in a flexible subscription model. With Webex Cloud running and connected, the solution features centralized management at an advanced level and provides robust security and reliability, ensuring that the system is always up-to-date.

Flexible options allowed users to choose phone numbers and calling plans freely, and BYOD reduced the operational load and cost of managing terminals

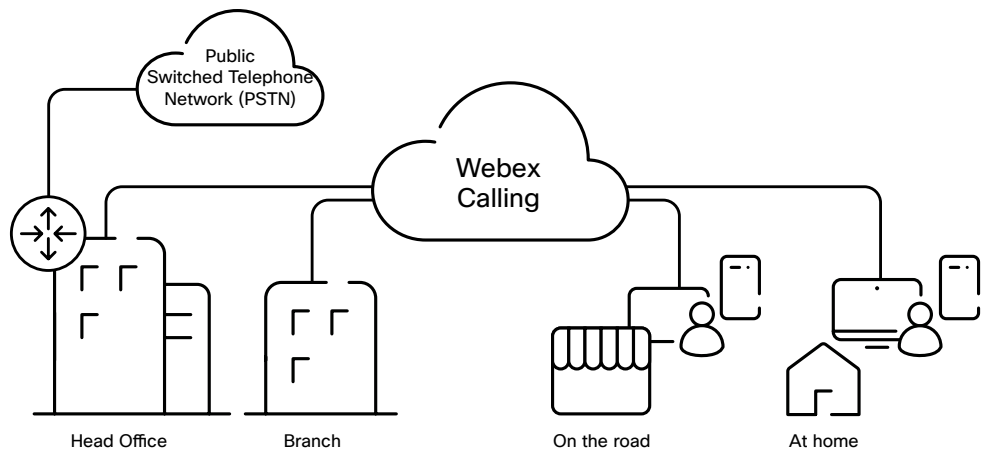
Webex Calling allows users to make calls from anywhere, using extension numbers, Dial-In Device (DID) numbers, directory URLs (email address format), or directory-based dialing.

It also offers a highly flexible option allowing users to choose any calling plan from a leading telecommunication carrier partnered with Cisco.

“Webex Calling allows our employees to access the company’s telephone system from their smartphones and use features in the same way as they were in the office, such as making or forwarding calls to outside numbers or between extension numbers. Using the main number without having a receptionist at the office is an advantage that was not possible with FMC. From the management perspective, BYOD can reduce the operation and procurement cost of the terminals since all we need is the application. It also offers the benefits of FMC, including free-of-charge internal calls.” (Kimura)

Webex Calling

This service provides reliable landline numbers to be used anywhere, from a smartphone, PC, or dedicated telephone device* simply by connecting it to PBX (Private Branch eXchange) on the cloud.



Realizing a flexible and remote working style in the age of New Normal

- The dedicated app allows users to receive calls for landline numbers when they work from home or remotely.
- In addition, it supports call forwarding between extension numbers, grouping incoming calls, and assigning numbers by department.
- It is designed to optimize business communication in the era of New Normal.

* Cisco products only. Webex Calling does not allow outgoing calls to 110, 119, or 118.



Legitimate phone numbers including Tokyo “03” and Osaka “06” are available on smartphones

- Legitimate landline numbers starting with a Tokyo “03” or Osaka “06” area code are available.
- The number provides assurance that is essential for all businesses.
- It is also possible to use the current number.



Available from personal smartphones or mobile devices

- There is no need to hand out company devices since it is accessible from personal smartphones.
- It works on any device of choice, and there is no need to have multiple devices for work and personal use.
- The status and settings of all devices can be managed on the cloud.

Phased migration to the cloud and seamless linkage with Webex Meetings and other devices are possible

Webex Calling provides a dial plan and a directory synchronized with the network consisting of cloud and on-premises infrastructure. In addition, Webex Platform allows seamless linkage with Webex Meetings and other devices. “We keep the CUCM on-premises and use it accordingly depending on the work. It connects well with Webex we’ve been using and makes it easier for us to work together through Webex online meetings and video conferences.” (Kimura)

Personalized settings helped employees adopt the BYOD policy without the concern of overwork

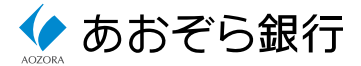
Webex Calling allows users to receive calls through their personalized voice mail boxes. “It’s also possible to disable incoming calls to be received on the phone during nighttime or holidays, allowing our employees to feel less hesitant to adopt BYOD. The centralized management of usage will also allow us to grasp the working situation of our employees and prevent them from overworking in a remote work setting.” (Kimura)

Results and the future

In May 2021, the Webex Calling system was successfully built for Aozora Bank. In July 2021, the Bank started installing the system to the requested departments after briefing on the functions and conducting a questionnaire on their request.

For the future outlook, Kimura says, “Webex Calling helped us set up a secure environment for our employees to work remotely even without the business smartphones because they can choose extension or outside lines on Webex Calling or use Webex Meetings as needed. We hope to complete the transition from FMC services to Webex Calling before the end of 2021.”

Lastly, Yamada expressed their expectation for Cisco as follows. “Cisco is the de facto standard for network and communication products, and we have confidence in what they do as a reliable provider throughout our long business relationship. As we go digital and pursue our business transformation, the reliability of our infrastructure is a critical platform for us to contribute to society. We expect such services to be free from trouble or interruptions.”



Business Name	Aozora Bank, Ltd.
Established	April 1957
Head Office Address	6-1-1 Kojimachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
Number of Locations	Japan: 21 branches and 1 office Overseas: 3 representative offices
Employee Count	2,332 (As of March 31, 2021)
URL	https://www.aozorabank.co.jp/english/

Aozora Bank has strengthened its unique and specialized business model by deepening its expertise in its focused areas. The Bank is continually evolving to become a reliable and distinctive Partner Bank that customers will truly trust. Becoming a group of dedicated, passionate, and accountable professionals with deepened expertise—this is what the Bank aims to be as they believe a small group consisting of talented members can still be powerful.

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