

Atea Denmark Adopts the Cisco CX Lifecycle Approach to Deliver Customer Success

ATEA

Executive Summary

Atea Denmark and Cisco Customer Experience in partnership deliver business critical services and a lifecycle approach to help Holstebro Kommune meet strategic objectives and deploy a transformational technology platform.

Customer Objective

- Help customers accelerate time to value for technology solutions
- Enable customers to integrate new technologies and solutions without disrupting business operations
- Up-level the customer experience, strengthen customer loyalty, and drive long-term growth

Cisco Solution

- Cisco Customer Experience (CX) organization partnered with Atea enhance adoption of products, services, and revenues
- DNA-based infrastructure enables public sector customers such as Holstebro municipality to automate and prepare to migrate to new technologies with minimal disruption

Business Outcome

- CX approach to project leadership helps customers create a strategic plan to achieve long-term outcomes
- Best practices and strategic guidance enable customers to utilize IT resources more efficiently
- Outcome-driven strategy helps organizations overcome barriers and drive a secure adoption plan to help customers achieve agreed KPIs



Toward a lifecycle services approach to transformation

Atea is the leading provider of IT infrastructure solutions in the Nordic and Baltic region, with NOK 37 billion in revenue, and more than 7,500 employees. Atea is present in 85 cities in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

As its customers increasingly focus on business outcomes and deploy software and as-a-service offerings, Atea understands that it requires a completely different approach to customers and partners—including an emphasis on value and profit realization.

“Customers aren’t investing in hardware anymore; they are investing in business outcomes,” said Lars Barenkopf, Atea Customer Experience Executive. “We need to change the dialogue with customers, moving it from IT rooms to the boardroom, which is challenging. Cisco is facing the same challenges and is committed to helping us forge these new relationships.”

A leader in building a customer experience practice

To stay fully aligned with changing customer expectations, Atea is working closely with Cisco to implement a customer experience (CX) practice based on a lifecycle selling approach. “We are forging the foundations of a totally new customer experience practice,” said Barenkopf.

Atea has been thinking about CX for years—even before Cisco’s program formally existed. The partner enrolled in the Cisco Lifecycle Advisor program in 2018, and was among the first dozen partners worldwide to enroll in the Cisco CX program in January, 2019.

To implement the program, Atea established a set of distinct CX roles aligned to Cisco's strategy, including:

- **Customer Experience Executives** who are responsible for the CX team, individual key customers, and development of the organization and new business areas
- **Customer Success Managers/Success Program Managers** who are responsible for the customer experience, understanding their expectations, and accelerating the customer through the lifecycle, building and driving their Success Plan
- **Customer Success Specialists (Systems Engineers)** who are lifecycle experts for the solution architecture, applying deep product knowledge to help customers implement their technical solution
- **Renewals Managers**, who perform risk assessment of renewal options, develop a renewals strategy, and negotiate and execute on renewals
- **An Activation Specialist** who is responsible for the high touch between sales and CX, to help align Atea activities with the Cisco incentives program

Together, Atea and Cisco are relentlessly focused on aligning technology innovation to business growth.

"We need to talk early in process about outcomes," said Barenkopf. "We don't talk as much about pricing, or device models, but about why we are putting the solution in place. It's about making a plan with the customer at the very beginning of the lifecycle and committing to move forward together."

Atea believes that its CX approach is a must-win battle for the organization, based on a whole new way of thinking throughout the organization.

"The investment and co-creation Cisco and Atea have both made is a fundamental requirement for today's marketplace," said Forsberg. "If we are going to succeed going forward, partners must commit to the program and invest in it. A CX program is very much a best practice from a partner perspective."

Enabling a municipality to optimize and automate

Atea has successfully applied its new CX approach to help a Danish municipality take several steps forward in its digital transformation journey. With 60,000 citizens, Holstebro Kommune has long been a loyal customer of Cisco and Atea. When some of its existing Cisco equipment neared end of life, its IT team turned to Atea to build a plan to update and maintain its network infrastructure.

The Atea CX team worked in close collaboration with Cisco CX and the IT management team of Holstebro to develop the Cisco DNA Center Feature Planning Accelerator, as well as Atea Awareness, and project goals

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Kathrine Forsberg
CEO of Atea

“The CX program provided an easy way for us to move to DNA Center, to enable our users and citizens to realize the full benefits and potential of our technology solution,” said Jesper Bunch Christensen, IT Operations Manager for Holstebro Kommune. “We have a large infrastructure with numerous sites and limited resources. We are looking to Atea’s CX team to continue to support us as we add more services.”

One of the most innovative aspects of the CX engagement was Atea’s commitment to understanding and optimizing management, to help its customer get the most value from their technology investment.

“The Atea Management Accelerator focuses on behavior, including changes in workflow, governance, help desk, and other processes,” said Nikolaj Kolte, Manager, IT & Digitization for Holstebro Kommune. “We discussed topics that we hadn’t usually considered when working with an IT vendor, to help implement a lifecycle-driven strategy.”

Atea also spearheaded development of a Python Script for rollout of new Cisco equipment for faster, cheaper and consistent deployment.

“The CX program has taken Holstebro Kommune through a series of valuable strategic thoughts of the future application of Cisco DNA features and services in our organization,” said Christensen. “The in-depth technical knowledge transfer program has given us a jump start on the actual implementation. Prior to DNA Center, I had one guy who was my go-to person to get the job done. One of my major goals is to empower our entire network team to do all the tasks.”

As the implementation continues and the Cisco partnership deepens, Holstebro is looking forward to continuing to look to Atea for guidance on expanding its scalable technology foundation as the community’s needs evolve.

Setting the stage for continued success

Atea is continuing to evolve its practice, working on new offers, building additional Success Plans, and obtaining additional training and certifications. As it applies its CX approach to more customers the partner is confident that it will succeed in building lasting customer relationships for years to come.

“Once a partner has engaged with the local Cisco office, the way we work together around CX creates so much value for the customers, as we have seen with Holstebro, that it is a no-brainer,” said Forsberg. “The way we are working with Cisco is state of the art, we will continue to work together in the future to succeed together.”

For more information

To find out more about Cisco Customer Experience and how we can accelerate your success, check out our ebook, [Accelerate Your Journey to Intent-Based Networking With Cisco Customer Experience](#). Or contact the Atea CX department, lars.barenkopf@atea.dk.

“We are looking forward to being a part of the further implementation of the CX program, and will closely monitor how the program can increase the value of our Cisco investment for years to come,”
“We have benefited from excellent collaboration with Atea and hope that the CX program can further strengthen that relationship.”

Jesper Bunch Christensen
IT Operations Manager for
Holstebro Kommune