# Decades of growth meet 21st-century solutions

As it evolved over time from start-up business to leading national supplier, Olé Mexican Foods became increasingly underserved by aging IT infrastructure. A complete IT overhaul, orchestrated by a new IT director and Windstream Enterprise, now has the company operating exceptionally smoothly, and at significantly lower IT cost than before.

## OLÉ MEXICAN FOODS

**Industry**

Packaged foods

**Customer**

1,000+ employees in the U.S.

7 manufacturing facilities

28 distribution centers

**Challenges**

Lack of sufficient data bandwidth

Lack of redundancy

Long-distance dialing

**Solutions**

29-location MPLS network

210-seat Mitel UCaaS

**Results**

Network freezes/downtime eliminated

No increase in data costs

Significant cost reductions in voice

## Complete IT overhaul

Started in 1988 as a small, Georgia-based supplier of homemade tortillas, Olé Mexican Foods grew over the years to become one of the nation's largest tortilla manufacturers and a nationwide distributor of tortillas, chorizos, cheeses and wellness products. As is often the case with corporations that evolved over that period, Olé Mexican Foods had outgrown its aging IT infrastructure by 2016.

Chief among the company's issues was bandwidth. Their carrier at that time supplied 1.5 Mbps at most remote sites, and there was no redundancy; everything was single point of failure. The corporate network would frequently freeze, with huge downloads sometimes crashing the entire network—and the company's financial exposure for complete loss of network/communication connectivity totaled up to $1.4 million per day. The services in place at that time cost the company nearly a half million dollars per year, on a high-cost, low-bandwidth platform that mostly worked but presented a serious risk.

In June of 2016, Olé Mexican Foods hired seasoned IT director Wilston Lynch to oversee a complete revamp of corporate IT infrastructure, including all data and voice operations. "My first order of business was to evaluate the company's information assets, with employee input," says Lynch. "It quickly became apparent that we simply weren't using 21st-century technology. IT was swamped just keeping the lights on with what they had."

## Defining a new solution

To create an optimal system based on strategic and technical planning, Lynch began by defining the requirements of an all-new IT architecture. Chief among them were MPLS networking, which would provide redundancy; UCaaS (Unified Communications as a Service) for company-wide voice communications, with improved service at a lower operating cost; and moving infrastructure from a server room at corporate headquarters to a new data center with clustering capability and internal redundancy.

> "One of the best things about implementation was that we migrated to MPLS without one second of downtime."

The next step was to select a vendor, and Lynch initiated discussions with three potential partners—one of the nation's largest telecommunications companies, a telecommunications broker and Windstream Enterprise, with whom Lynch had worked in a previous role. Analysis across all three prospects showed Windstream Enterprise to be superior in terms of bandwidth and associated cost. Lynch's previous experience had demonstrated that Windstream Enterprise was especially savvy when it came to defining service requirements, and with Windstream Enterprise on board, Lynch and his new team began defining goals and expectations for the new infrastructure.

## Rapid implementation

That infrastructure, implemented over a year and a half, was built upon a single-vendor solution for network and phone services including a 29-location MPLS network and a 210-seat UCaaS solution. Applications were upgraded through technical enhancements to ensure 100% uptime and optimization of vendor resources for project and day 2 support. "One of the best things about implementation was that we migrated to MPLS without one second of downtime," says Lynch.

Olé Mexican Foods' IT infrastructure now includes much more bandwidth than before. Three data-intensive locations operate with 50 Mbps on the MPLS network, and corporate headquarters and the new data center each have 250 Mbps. Redundancy at the data center ensures continuing Internet should MPLS drop out, keeping the company always operational. In addition, the new UCaaS system—implemented across all corporate locations within a three-month period—greatly improved the company's voice functionality, including name recognition, caller ID and four-digit dialing.

"I was humbled by the speed of implementation" says Lynch. "That this could all be accomplished in 1.5 years is amazing— switching carriers, gaining redundancy, implementing a new voice platform and new network infrastructure and moving control from headquarters to a new data center. Windstream Enterprise drove the timeline, delivering circuits and the UCaaS platform on schedule. There were glitches, normal in a project of this scope, but the Windstream Enterprise project manager kept it all on track with consistent delivery. Having engineering resources in every meeting helped tremendously."

## An IT foundation for the future

While the overriding goal was IT improvement rather than cost reduction, Olé Mexican Foods' update with 21st-century IT had a favorable financial impact. Replacing long distance with four-digit dialing reduced operating expenses by tens of thousands of dollars per year, with ROI on UCaaS expected in just over a year. On the data side, the company spend was roughly the same cost as before, with far more bandwidth and redundancy and with downtime and network freezes eliminated completely.

Very importantly, the company is now more securely positioned for additional growth. "We're in the process of relocating one of our Florida locations now with Windstream Enterprise's assistance," says Lynch. "I know I can count on them for any new locations we open, and the system Windstream Enterprise implemented will be extremely easy and cost-effective to scale. Beyond that, Windstream Enterprise takes care of it all, right down to training employees on new capabilities—they're expert at doing what they do."

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