The logistics of performance

A leading provider of shipping services, LSO is a regional parcel carrier with 60 locations throughout the U.S. Despite its size, LSO provides levels of service equal to those of its national competitors, at a rate that is 40% less expensive, while extending money-backed guarantees for additional quality assurance. When faced with unexpected and reoccurring outages, LSO turned to Windstream Enterprise for a more reliable, scalable and cost-effective network technology solution.

Driven to expand

The delivery industry serves two masters—time and the customer—and success or failure is determined by a company’s ability to please both equally, which is no small task, especially when customers are relying on critical deliveries such as medical supplies or legal documents. Even in this environment and with competition from industry giants like UPS and FedEx, LSO has carved out an impressive niche among carriers that’s even bigger than the state where it began.

LSO began as Lone Star Overnight, a Texas parcel delivery firm more than 25-years ago. In 2014, they acquired Nashville-based Express Courier, and as their business expanded outside of Texas, they changed the name of the company to LSO to better convey the depth and breadth of their service. Today, the company has 1,000 employees including some 200 performing administrative functions. However, the majority of the workforce consists of 800 ‘on-road resources,’ that pick-up and deliver thousands of packages every day.

Growing pains

An expanded company footprint meant greater market opportunity, but the first task was integration. Enter Neal Cung, who joined in 2016 as CTO and CIO to handle the many technical challenges of bringing two companies together including two headquarters—Lone Star’s in Austin and Express Courier’s in Nashville—and some 60 total business locations in metro areas across the states they serve. In addition to multiple vendors, operating systems, and network platforms, all with a heavy reliance on legacy technologies like MPLS with single 1.5Mbps T1s. Network outages became common, and a lack of redundancy meant that when connections to the data center
went down, the operational integrity of this 24/7 business went
down with it. As a full-service parcel carrier, LSO is responsible
for tracking the status of the 50,000 customers shipping the
parcels, as well as providing the status for the consignees
(recipients of the parcels), numbering in the millions.

“The multiple challenges we faced required
a solution that would reduce network
downtime, and enable us to adapt quickly
to the changing business environment.”

With implications of that magnitude, Cung’s approach to
remediating the situation was strictly business. “Technology is
first and foremost an enabler of what the business does. We pick
up and deliver packages and the technology solution must
support both strategic and tactical goals. The multiple
challenges we faced required a solution that would reduce
network downtime, and enable us to adapt quickly to the
changing business environment.”

Special delivery
After exploring other options and providers, Cung and LSO chose
Windstream Enterprise to implement a software-defined
wide-area network (SD-WAN) as an overlay that made it easier to
knit locations and operating systems together. LSO also deployed
dual access connections to enable the SD-WAN to provide the
required uptime for business continuity. “IT agility and turning up
new locations is important. Our facility in Austin has outgrown its
location and though we are ‘just’ moving down the street, it’s a
major operation. We’re confident as that site comes online,
Windstream Enterprise will ensure everything is in alignment.”

“As a tech leader, I have to look at the latest
and greatest proven tech available.
SD-WAN has not been around a long time
but with the benefits I’m seeing, I am
100% confident it was the right solution.”

In conjunction with their SD-WAN implementation, LSO also
opened a second network/data colocation facility in Atlanta so
that in the event the Austin facility goes down, the system
would remain online and business can continue without
interruption. Windstream Enterprise’s Professional Services
team was instrumental in migrating LSO’s legacy network to
SD-WAN.

Down the road
LSO is already realizing operational cost savings and anticipates
more as implementation continues and they become increasingly
familiar with SD-WAN’s features and benefits. As they anticipate
increasing performance and reliability, LSO looks forward to
leveraging the monitoring and self-service management tools to
further optimize network reliability performance, and utilizing the
operating alerts that Windstream Enterprise SD-WAN can
uniquely provide.

LSO is looking next to improving their voice/unified
communications and call center capabilities by deploying
Windstream Enterprise’s UCaaS and CCaaS solutions over their
SD-WAN service. Thanks to Windstream Enterprise SD-WAN and
these future planned improvements, LSO’s ongoing integration
and network transformation ride should lead to non-stop progress
and rearview mirror views of milestones achieved and exceeded.

About Windstream Enterprise
Windstream Enterprise collaborates with businesses across the U.S. to drive digital
transformation by delivering solutions that solve today’s most complex networking
and communication challenges.

To learn more about
Windstream Enterprise, visit
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