



A major lift in operations and service

Based in the Southeast U.S., the material handling firm operates more than ten branch offices throughout the region that offer lift truck sales, leasing, parts, service, rental, and fleet management, plus over 5,000 material handling products. Customer relationships are managed by specialists with extensive product and application training. Rapid employee growth and the addition of new applications were straining the network, causing frequent outages and a sluggish performance. The firm knew it was time to turn to external network vendors for assistance.

Industry

Material handling: lift trucks, conveyers and storage solutions

Customer

Headquarters in the Southeast U.S.

200+ employees

10+ branch locations

Challenges

Frequent outages with single-connection MPLS

No network visibility

Slow application performance

Inability to move forward with a major field service objective

Solutions

SD-WAN Concierge™

Hybrid WAN with MPLS

Managed Network Security to support BYOB (bring your own broadband) circuits

Results

Higher quality network performance

Improved network reliability with zero outages

Staff productivity improvements

Improved application uptime and performance

Superior customer experience with new aftermarket service automation (ASA)

Design review

The company's network was operating over a 1.5 Mbps MPLS network for data and voice communications among branch locations, customers, and vendors. The infrastructure could not support a planned ASA (aftermarket service automation) for customer care in the field. All of this made it abundantly clear to the company's IT department, that a new WAN approach had to be a top corporate imperative.

Without an in-house IT staff, they needed a highly capable vendor to recommend and implement a solution to their network challenges. After considering multiple vendors, they engaged Windstream Enterprise for a thorough needs and options analysis. Following initial discussions, Windstream Enterprise arranged an SD-WAN Concierge™ live-action demonstration for key staff. The decision makers were impressed by SD-WAN's resiliency, visibility, scalability and performance; they gave Windstream Enterprise the greenlight to move forward. Windstream Enterprise proceeded to design a network that would be always available and deliver ample bandwidth for near- and long-term needs.

A new plan

Rather than sunseting the company's existing MPLS network, Windstream Enterprise recommended a hybrid network with SD-WAN layered "over the top" (OTT) of improved MPLS capabilities. This included increasing MPLS bandwidths from 1.5 Mbps to 10 Mbps and introducing bring-your-own broadband for diverse connectivity. The newly redundant connectivity was configured in active/active mode for seamless failover. Cloud-based Managed Network Security was added to further reduce risk and ensure network availability.

“Windstream Enterprise SD-WAN proved to work as advertised for us, and we’re so pleased. It solved the problems that were plaguing our old network, and we couldn’t have launched our ASA program without the reliability and speed that SD-WAN delivers.”

In the new design, SD-WAN linked headquarters and branch locations into one logical view of the network; Windstream Enterprise’s WE Connect portal enabled visibility and control, proactive management, agility and scalability. Dynamic WAN selection automatically finds the best path to optimize performance based on predetermined thresholds, with business and application routing practices centrally managed. Windstream Enterprise SD-WAN is fully managed to enable outsourcing the ongoing burdens of network management.

All objectives met

Since implementing SD-WAN Concierge and related network improvements, the company has experienced zero network outages. Windstream Enterprise’s implementation was given an ultimate test when a primary fiber connection went down for two days at one remote location, and the seamless failover to a secondary connection ensured there was no interruption in application access or performance. As a true example of “business continuity”—rather than “disaster recovery”—operations remained “business as usual” at that facility.

Quality of network performance proved to be far superior to that of the previous network and eliminating sluggish applications performance improved overall staff productivity. The company proceeded with implementing their ASA objective, and their service personnel now work on tablets at customer locations to efficiently deliver superior customer service. This includes interacting live with customers during updates, accessing historical information, checking on previous maintenance repairs, and tracking time spent with customers. The automated ASA has greatly increased field personnel effectiveness while improving the company’s overall customer experience.

“We were impressed with the over-the-top capability that Windstream Enterprise offered. We could keep our MPLS in place and add broadband access in an active/active configuration to give us the redundancy we needed, plus the increased bandwidth to speed up our systems.”

Throughout the transition to their new network, the company remained thoroughly pleased with Windstream Enterprise. “Windstream Enterprise is a very professional team, they’ve always addressed the challenges we faced when network issues were encountered. They provide a network of resources to help us, including a highly capable representative as our primary point of contact. Our company looks forward to a long and successful relationship.”

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
windstreamenterprise.com

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