



A bias for quality

Calico is all about helping customers create great rooms and great homes to enhance the quality of their lives. The Calico retail stores do this by focusing on decorative fabrics, custom window treatments, furniture, bedding and more. The Calico clientele expects the best, and even at discounted prices, they are willing to invest in custom furnishings created to suit their style. Understandably, customer expectations are very high, so when Calico’s network failed to fit their pattern of excellence, it was time to find a partner that could match their reputation.

At a glance

calico

Industry

Specialty retail (decorative fabrics and furnishings)

Customer

Headquarters Kennett Square, PA

1600 employees

69 company/10 franchise retail locations across 27 states

Challenges

Insufficient bandwidth

Poor application performance

Antiquated PBX phone systems

Limited staff to manage multiple vendors

Solutions

SD-WAN Concierge™

OfficeSuite UC®

Broadband and LTE access

Results

Eliminated network outages

Reliable phone and collaboration services

Network and voice visibility and control

Significant cost savings

Wearing thin

Calico has wisely recognized trends in design and home furnishings and adapted successfully to them. Over time, they expanded from primarily fabric sales with the addition of custom window treatments, upholstered furniture and other services. Calico’s upscale consumer and trade customers have come to count on the company’s free design services and choice of 5,000+ luxury fabrics at discount prices, available at their nearly 70 retail locations and online.

For Barbara Shields, Calico’s CIO, this change in retail marketing model was a key driver for upgrading the firm’s legacy systems, which were failing to keep up with the shifting needs of their corporate and store personnel. Calico’s antiquated, on-premises PBX phone systems—which were no longer supported by the manufacturer—caused 3-4 outages per month that lasted up to a week.

As business moved from in-store to online, bandwidth needs were growing, but Calico’s existing MPLS network with ‘skinny’ T1’s struggled to maintain application performance and resulted in a poor user experience for employees

and customers. Their MPLS network also lacked redundancy, so if a circuit went down, they were unable to process orders.

“OfficeSuite UC has given us a reliable phone system that’s easy to manage, easy to use and has delivered significant cost savings.”

Barbara Shields, CIO, Calico

Interior redesign

Shields knew it was time to make transitioning to the cloud a priority. To start, Windstream Enterprise recommended OfficeSuite UC to replace the antiquated on-premises phone system. It was easier to manage and deliver a consistent user experience at all locations. Plus, features like call-forwarding and auto-attendants made a major impact by ensuring incoming customer calls got to the correct person faster, improving sales and the customer experience.

For resiliency and redundancy, Windstream Enterprise recommended SD-WAN Concierge to replace T1s with high-bandwidth broadband cable or Ethernet as the primary connection. Cellular broadband would provide backup in an active/passive configuration with Windstream Enterprise providing and managing both broadband connections. Moreover, Windstream Enterprise's Proof of Concept included OfficeSuite UC that clearly demonstrated the superior performance and resiliency of an SD-WAN solution.

Custom-made solution

Calico's transformation from multiple vendors to Windstream Enterprise as a single managed service provider has removed the complexity of managing their communications platform and significantly reduced the burden on the IT staff, who now have more time to spend on innovative projects designed to increase revenues and customer experience.

With the implementation of cloud-based OfficeSuite UC, Calico has seen a definite improvement in the customer experience. Frequent outages and long periods of downtime have become a thing of the past in the stores.

With SD-WAN, the days of network outages and waiting for help to arrive are gone. When one of the stores lost the primary cable connection, the wireless backup was so seamless, the store continued to operate for several days without being aware the cable connection was down.

An added benefit of the Windstream Enterprise solution has been the WE Connect portal that gives network and application visibility and control to Calico IT personnel. With the online portal, the IT team can easily and routinely update application priorities, create and track trouble tickets, assess performance and manage phone settings for all their locations, without having to go to each location to program the system.

"We really needed and benefitted from Windstream's experience in doing this implementation," said Shields. "Throughout the project, their approach stayed the same—never dropping the ball while keeping the whole project on track and leading us through the process."

"Our SD-WAN solution has done exactly what we expected it to do, by increasing application performance and resiliency. We have had zero outages with SD-WAN."

Barbara Shields, CIO, Calico

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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