



From gnarly wipeouts to rad freeriding with SD-WAN

As the Midwest's leading bike, ski and board retailer, ERIK'S core business principles include professional staff, unbeatable customer service and remarkable product expertise—all in a friendly store environment. To support the company's goal of delivering the best customer service in their industry, ERIK'S needed higher resiliency and more bandwidth for its proprietary operating system, database and voice communications.

At a glance



Industry

Retailer

Customer

30 stores across 6 states

Challenges

Limited bandwidth

Limited IT resources

Unreliable phone system

No network redundancy

Solutions

SD-WAN Concierge™

Broadband connections (cable and cellular)

Results

Reliable voice services

Fully managed implementation

More efficient database management

Zero network outages since SD-WAN installation

Riding on wobbly wheels

As a retailer of high-performance bikes, snowboards and downhill skis, ERIK'S relies on a proprietary operating system and a centralized database to enable the flow of sales, inventory and customer information from its outlets to its headquarters. The company also depends on traditional voice telephony for external communications. Since ERIK'S grew to 30 stores across 6 states, it needed higher resiliency and more bandwidth to support the integrated flow of data.

In their old network deployment, each ERIK'S outlet tied in to the company's central warehouse and HQ using a single network connection. Typically, one store a month would experience a network outage. Depending on the severity of the outage, an employee at the store might handle it—or, in certain cases, a tech from the local networking provider.

Like many multi-location retailers, ERIK'S updated their central database nightly by pulling sales data from each store. Due to the single connections at each location, synchronizations tended to be slow and cumbersome.

“We selected Windstream Enterprise because they were the most knowledgeable SD-WAN provider and had the footprint to support all of our markets with the ability to provision and manage third-party broadband providers.”

Tim Curtin

VP/Manager Information Systems

What's more, many ERIK'S stores relied on aging POTS lines for their voice services. Since carriers were no longer maintaining these decades-old phone lines, the voice service at many ERIK'S locations was spotty at best.

While the company had a failover connection in place for the warehouse, the failover speeds weren't adequate to maintain service to their stores in the event of a lost connection. That spurred Erik Saltvold, Founder and CEO of ERIK'S, and his head of IT, Tim Curtin, to look for a better option.

Moving on to fresh terrain

Saltvold and Curtin were interested in SD-WAN as an upgrade path from their legacy communications network. But with a full-time IT team of just three people, a DIY solution wasn't an option. ERIK'S needed a managed service from a provider with a proven track record of successful installations. The company chose SD-WAN Concierge™ from Windstream Enterprise.

According to Curtin, the Windstream Enterprise Cloud Core™ network footprint was a key factor in the decision, along with WE's ability to support multiple broadband vendors. Combined with the resiliency of the dual connectivity of the SD-WAN Concierge edge device—and the WE team's reputation for building personalized network solutions—ERIK'S got an SD-WAN solution that met all of the company's requirements.

Gearing up for success

Windstream Enterprise deployed an SD-WAN edge at every location, incorporating two separate broadband cable connections at most locations in an active/active configuration. In locations where only a single cable connection was available, WE deployed a cellular broadband device in an active/passive configuration.

To support the proprietary ERIK'S operating system and database, WE established two high-bandwidth connections at the company's headquarters. Combined with the dual connections at each location, this enabled a significant increase in bandwidth for each store and greatly accelerated the nightly data transfers.

Additionally, Windstream Enterprise deployed voice services over SD-WAN to eliminate the need for copper infrastructure. After some fine-tuning from WE network specialists, ERIK'S now has seamless voice quality over broadband IP.

Finally, both cable and cellular broadband connections were provided in a fully managed mode to ease the burden of management and deployment on ERIK'S staff.

A smoother ride ahead

Since ERIK'S Bike, Board and Ski implemented SD-WAN Concierge, the company has seen zero downtime. WE's 24-hour monitoring means the WE team will issue trouble tickets to local providers as necessary, letting Saltvold and Curtin work a normal day. Plus, WE Connect—the Windstream Enterprise management portal—gives Curtin a centralized platform to monitor network performance.

“Windstream Enterprise delivered a great solution that met our needs for higher resiliency and more bandwidth, enabling us to deliver a superior customer experience.”

Erik Saltvold
Founder and CEO

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