



Wholesaler gains cloud-optimized network solution—and a whole lot more

Johnstone Supply, a leading wholesale distributor, is committed to being the go-to resource for commercial and residential HVAC parts and equipment. But when disparate network systems began causing weekly outages for one of their co-op divisions, Johnstone Supply, The Sheehan Group—it was costing the co-op upwards of \$100,000 per outage—The Sheehan Group looked to Windstream Enterprise to stand up a reliable network solution that would support the service experience their customers expect.

At a glance



The Sheehan Group

Industry

Wholesale distribution

Customer

13 co-op locations across MI/OH

Challenges

Disparate voice and data networks

Lack of resiliency

Frequent network outages

Limited IT resources

Solutions

SD-WAN Concierge™

Fiber connections for active/active

Dynamic PRI voice service

Managed Network Security (MNS)

Results

Smooth cloud migration

Zero network outages

Improved customer experience

Failover fails cool the mood

Johnstone Supply, The Sheehan Group (JS-SG) conducts their business primarily by taking customer orders over the phone; the voice system ran over their private MPLS network. Orders were then input into enterprise resource planning (ERP) software on a VPN network for inventory servicing. However, there was no reliable, automated failover between the two, so if the voice network experienced an outage, orders were lost for days and business was affected for weeks after that. Conversely, if headquarters experienced an outage, the ERP system would be unavailable across all retail locations, bringing order servicing to a grinding halt.

A small or one-time glitch in either network? Frustrating, but manageable. But frequent outages across multiple locations in a highly competitive wholesale market? That's an economic and a brand risk that JS-SG knew it couldn't afford to take.

Onward and upward (to the cloud)

While network resiliency was the primary goal, it wasn't the only item JS-SG had on the agenda. The team also endeavored to migrate some of their on-premises services to the cloud.

“We’ve experienced zero outages since implementing SD-WAN, and estimate we’ve avoided losing more than a hundred thousand dollars in revenues annually.”

Matt Lafata, IT Manager, Johnstone Supply, The Sheehan Group

First was the desire to replace their on-premises firewall with a cloud-based security service. Short on IT resources—and wanting to shift his focus to more strategic work—IT manager Matt Lafata looked to offload the management of security hardware and software to experienced security experts.

The JS-SG team was also interested in outsourcing their mission-critical ERP application to a cloud services provider (CSP). In order to make that transition possible and move the business forward, they needed to upgrade their network to prioritize application performance, improve resilience and ensure security.

Reliability, flexibility and security in abundant supply

After consulting with the Johnstone Supply, The Sheehan Group team to fully understand their current needs and future goals, Windstream Enterprise and Windstream Enterprise Channel Partner, Lotus Solutions Group, recommended a suite of cloud-optimized network solutions that would connect, transform and elevate the customer experience across locations.

The foundation of the solution was SD-WAN Concierge™ with dual access in an active/active configuration. Windstream Enterprise provided high-bandwidth fiber and T1 connections as the secondary access path, enabling JS-SG to bring their own broadband connections for greater flexibility and cost-efficiency. Dynamic PRI was launched in conjunction with another PRI provider to ensure an always-on voice and data solution across the single SD-WAN network.

Finally, Windstream Enterprise deployed cloud-based Managed Network Security (MNS) supporting each of the 13 locations, eliminating the need for an on-premises solution.

The setup was designed to support high-demand applications while ensuring network resiliency, so that no orders were left in the lurch again. It also enabled JS-SG to move their mission-critical ERP applications to a CSP.

The future is heating up

Since implementing SD-WAN Concierge, the team has experienced zero network outages—not even when a vehicle crash downed a telephone pole near headquarters and the primary circuit was down for a month. What's more, the team's ERP solution has been successfully moved to the cloud.

The JS-SG team appreciates that in those instances where issues occur, the SD-WAN Concierge support team provides proactive notifications and instructs on corrective actions. What's more, Lafata regularly uses the WE Connect portal to monitor network and application performance.

With Dynamic PRI, JS-SG has created two hubs for trunk overflow and resiliency. The new voice system enables call routing to reach remote sites and support overflow employees who are tagged in when all onsite phone lines are busy, reducing customer wait times.

Now powered by a secure, resilient network solution, JS-SG is delivering consistently great experiences their customers can depend on—and their brand can build on.

“We chose Windstream Enterprise for our SD-WAN solution because they were the most knowledgeable provider, and the only provider willing to take on all aspects of the data and voice network.”

Matt Lafata, IT Manager, Johnstone Supply, The Sheehan Group

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.

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