



Don't get blindsided by legacy MPLS: A manufacturer's journey to network resiliency

As a U.S.-based company with a massive global reach, Norman® USA has made significant investments to bring distributors the most innovative, highest quality products. But exceeding industry standards requires a modern, redundant network with high availability and unrivaled reliability that can perform flawlessly even on an international level. That's why Norman made the move to SD-WAN from Windstream Enterprise to serve their customers a superior experience with boundless possibilities.

At a glance

NORMAN®

SHUTTERS. BLINDS. SHADES.

Industry

Manufacturing

Customer

11 U.S. locations

40+ year history

500+ U.S. employees

Challenges

Network outages

Limited bandwidth

Unreliable voice system

Supporting on-premises security

Solutions

SD-WAN Concierge™

Managed Network Security

High bandwidth Ethernet

Broadband Cable

Dynamic IP

WE Connect

Results

Increased bandwidth and reliability

High performing apps and voice

No network outages

Cost-effective business continuity

Improved security and protection

Blinded by legacy solutions

"To be the best, you have to do it yourself." These are the words that Norman—the U.S. division of NienMade—live by as the #1 window shutter manufacturer in the world. Norman prides itself on leading the industry in quality, service, selection and value. Very few companies will farm their own wood, make their own components or weave their own cords. But for Norman, having visibility and control into every step of the process is what keeps them on top.

A high standard for crafting and delivering superior products requires the same standard for their network to drive an exceptional level of business.

Norman had relied on Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) for decades, but after educating themselves on Software-Defined Wide Area Networks (SD-WAN), their IT team, led by Systems Administrator James Wang, was inspired to improve network reliability by adopting a more redundant solution. Their single threaded MPLS network lacked resiliency which resulted in the occasional outage. Whenever the network stalled, locations were unable to receive or process orders.

Sprawled out over 11 U.S. locations, and many others worldwide, Norman required greater bandwidth to support data synchronizations between each location, but adding MPLS T1s was too costly of an option.

Their network also needed to support the migration of voice to IP, which were imperative to running educational online webinars and training sessions for the distributors selling and installing their products.

Security was another priority. Security solutions at U.S. locations were on-premises, which put a strain on their five-person IT team anytime local support was requested.

"Windstream Enterprise has been an ideal partner. They are always available whenever I need them and are highly responsive to our needs."

James Wang
Systems Administrator

A window of opportunity

After assessing the situation, Windstream Enterprise worked with Norman to deploy SD-WAN Concierge™ with a primary Ethernet connection and a secondary cable broadband in an active/active configuration. While Windstream Enterprise provided and managed some of the cable connections, this ultimately gave Norman the flexibility to bring their own broadband to some locations.

Next up, Dynamic IP Voice Services was installed to promote a seamless user experience delivered over the SD-WAN network via a SIP trunk connection.

Windstream Enterprise established a geographically diverse second SIP trunk to ensure business continuity for their voice services.

Additionally, Norman implemented Windstream Enterprise's Managed Network Security (MNS) Cloud to address security needs. This service provided firewall protection to replace the on-premises CPE at all U.S. locations.

The WE Connect portal was another valuable tool that gave James a revolutionary digital experience, by combining network analytics, service management, reporting, location visibility and customer support features into a single view—making it easy to manage their network applications.

Basking in the benefits

James and his team were very satisfied with the newly implemented solutions from Windstream Enterprise. Since then, there have been no shady outages caused by network failure. The network is now highly reliable, just like the service they provide their customers.

The Ethernet and broadband connections delivered the bandwidth necessary for their modern-day applications and voice services. Any location can host online training seminars for their distributors and installers without fear of the network crashing.

MNS Cloud removed the burden of management from Norman's IT team—they no longer needed remote IT support on a whim. James can rest assured that their partners at Windstream Enterprise are providing security expertise and protection to each location.

The Dynamic IP voice solution ensures the high quality and reliability, with the added benefit of cost-effective business continuity. In fact, by eliminating MPLS T1s and separate voice circuits, the new solution brought significantly more value at the same cost as their legacy network and voice services.

James continues to use WE Connect on a regular basis to monitor network performance throughout all U.S. locations. "WE Connect is easy to use and lets me quickly see what's going on with my network," said James. "I can make my own routing changes in minutes as opposed to calling a service provider and waiting days for a change to be made."

A bright future at Norman

For Norman, everything matters and anything is possible. By upgrading their SD-WAN to be more reliable, efficient and flexible, it became possible for this manufacturer to uphold their promise of exceptional service alongside their premium products.

Making the switch to SD-WAN translated into more free time for Norman's IT team, allowing them to focus on innovation. "By having Windstream Enterprise manage our network, voice and security services, our team now has the time to research other technologies, seek out ways to improve our IT environment and upgrade our systems," said James. "We no longer need to worry about the network."

Post-deployment, James is pleased with the service he received from Windstream Enterprise. He looks forward to helping the business achieve the highest industry standards.

"While we considered other SD-WAN service providers, we liked the features of Windstream Enterprise's SD-WAN much better."

James Wang
Systems Administrator

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