SUN-MAID CASE STUDY

VENERATED FOOD COMPANY USES LEVEL 3℠ CONVERGED SERVICES FOR MANAGED DATA AND VOICE COMMUNICATIONS

Customer Profile

While Sun-Maid looks to old-fashioned hard work and individual farmers to produce its sweet treats, the tools and infrastructure needed to bring its products to market are decidedly more modern. The grower-owned cooperative relies on a steady stream of data and communication across its complex integrated network of custom applications, equipment and facilities to support business continuity now and in the future.

Overview

Challenge:

Already at peak bandwidth and reliant on tape-based backups, the organization's legacy communications and disaster recovery infrastructure made it difficult to centrally support growers, supply chain members and geographically distributed facilities.

"Between driving a couple of hours to a facility and wrestling with tapes to get systems back online, the entire recovery process could take as many as 48 hours to complete, which was unacceptable," says Andy Schmidt, Director of IT at Sun-Maid Growers of California. "We realized that adding bandwidth to our network would not only strengthen our disaster recovery plans, it would also eliminate communications barriers, better integrate our technologies and support our efforts to provide better IT services internally and externally."

With its previous vendor, Sun-Maid had limited options for bringing smaller, more geographically isolated sites onto the network due to the costs of expanding and limited connectivity routes. At the same time, Sun-Maid's daily data production across its primary operations continued to increase, maxing the company's available bandwidth and leaving little left over for disaster scenarios.

Solution

Sun-Maid leveraged Level 3 Converged Services to integrate their voice, data and secure Internet technologies and simplify network management. Level 3 also helped deliver greater bandwidth flexibility to meet Sun-Maid's increasing demands.

"Based on our daily output, we needed more than double our standard bandwidth to write backups over the wire instead of relying on tape, It was cost prohibitive, but a necessary step for our business." Schmidt says. "Level 3 worked to not only understand our technology challenges, but also our financial constraints and business culture to deliver a solution that works for us now and into the future. The result has been a solid relationship that also addresses our long-term sustainability and success."

The solution's multi-service shared bandwidth delivers dynamic, instantaneous scaling to match the customer's increase or decrease in network traffic. In addition, combining multiple services onto a single port minimizes hardware investment and maintenance, while Level 3-provided managed premises-based Integrated Access Devices (IADs) enable remote service monitoring for more responsive troubleshooting without adding headcount or complexity.

Planning for the Future with Level 3

Since adopting data and communication services from Level 3, the biggest improvement has been to Sun-Maid's disaster recovery capabilities. Previously, disaster recovery required support personnel to drive hours to the site, spend hours reading tapes and manually restoring systems over the course of up to two days.

With Level 3, the entire recovery process can be achieved in a matter of hours over the MPLS/IP VPN network to replicate data on-demand or in scheduled intervals. Remote disaster recovery enabled by stable, secure, and reliable connectivity reduces the travel time and costs associated with manual tape backup processes. More importantly, the Level 3 solution eliminates excess downtime and lost productivity, minimizing the potential impact disasters might have on the company's daily business or bottom line.

> "We've seen a night-and-day difference with our approach to disaster recovery. We're smarter, more agile, and can respond to remote sites without all of the hassle," says Schmidt. "The transformation has been welcomed by everyone — companywide."

Looking to the future, Sun-Maid is also extremely excited to see the potential that the Level 3 solution offers as it keeps a keen eye on growing its business. As new facilities are established, the company can rapidly deploy new services and applications — all remotely and faster than ever.

"Level 3 Converged Services give us scalability and bandwidth flexibility to quickly react to any immediate need across our business and to plan for future services," Schmidt says. "It's a level of agility that enables us to stay ahead of the business so that IT isn't the bottleneck in decision-making. Ultimately, we're now being viewed more as a business enabler, rather than a cost center."

Overview

Business Needs:

- Enhanced services for remote facilities
- Accelerated disaster recovery
- Increased bandwidth and scalability

Solutions:

- Level 3℠ Converged Services
- Level 3® MPLS/IP VPN
- Level 3℠ Secure Internet Access (SIA)
- Level 3® Managed Router, Integrated Access Device (IAD)

Benefits:

- Decreased time required for disaster recovery from days to hours
- Improved network and cost efficiencies
- Increased overall network bandwidth and availability
- Better supported remote facilities with more reliable, scalable services
- Improved confidence in network by leveraging a proven service provider with local support

ABOUT LEVEL 3

We operate and take end-to-end responsibility for network solutions that connect you to the world. We put customers first and take ownership of reliability and security across our broad portfolio.

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