Managed SD-WAN transforms cloud access and remote collaboration at national property company

Success with Secure Agility: Case Study

SDwan 4

SDwan to the power of 4

With a presence across Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and countless other branch offices, a national property management group needed a secure, efficient network to cut costs and establish a platform for collaboration.

The company is one of Australia's leading property groups, with a portfolio across the commercial, retail, industrial and social infrastructure sectors. Its existing technology footprint was not optimal and encompassed numerous vendor solutions with no central management.

Greater cost efficiencies achieved by utilising fixed and mobile carrier technologies to deliver cloud and application services to branch locations

Dated technology held back projects

The existing network architecture was not leveraging next generation technologies or a modern security posture. Visibility into real-time and historical metrics was limited and report generation was cumbersome. Deploying staff at new sites in rapid timeframes was not achievable, which often delayed projects and go-live dates.

With network challenges holding back business transformation, IT staff began looking at refreshing edge site network services to reduce the cost of their WAN by taking advantage of SD-WAN technologies.

Charlie Tannous, Director of Technology at Secure Agility, said the technical challenges extended to both staff and the business. "Sites are operated by managers, almost like a separate business, and the network was very much a hub and spoke with limited visibility into what was happening," Tannous said. "Multiple carriers were used to deliver a mesh of a network and there was poor support and flexibility with that model."

"It was costing time and money to manage and staff were not able to be flexible around connecting from any site or location to a public cloud application."

The business needed to reduce opex, but also introduce new technologies and deliver more bandwidth to sites with better support and SLA models.

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>
> **Charlie Tannous,** Secure Agility

An opportunity to revitalise and take a secure, software-defined path

The IT and business leaders sought to transition the network so it would be a pivotal point for the business to go completely SaaS-based, as well as enable the business to keep workloads in current locations to serve staff across any type of connection.

With the existing solution not leveraging new technologies which would deliver secure edge functionality, the goal was to deliver a single managed IT infrastructure for all WAN, LAN and wireless access topologies.

Simplified management of network services utilising a single vendor to provide routing, local security, switching and wireless access would also ease ongoing management.

Following a competitive tender, Secure Agility won a bid to deploy Cisco products and services into the customer's sites to refresh and replace existing network services for wireless, switching and edge devices, including firewalls for security.

The tender also included a complete redesign of the customer's primary and secondary data centre L2-L3 topology.

The solution involved deploying and configuring new devices at the sites, terminating, or reducing, the incumbent telco services where required and re-engineering the WAN and network topology to make the best use of the Internet for SaaS services.

Different lines of business also demanded consistency with compliance requirements.

As the rollout completed, Secure Agility also took over management of SD-WAN services. New governance and project control structures saw a streamlined approach to implementation that delivered a controlled deployment of services, minimising impact and disruption to site commissioning in the process.

The new MSP approach allowed the business to look at different access technologies for its WAN, including 4G to deploy staff at any site quickly.

An SD-WAN would provide better security at the edge for local Internet breakout and greater performance of SaaS-based applications for staff.

By providing a consistent vendor technology environment across the LAN, WAN and wireless infrastructure, the network is secure and protected against attacks.

Utilisation of multiple Internet circuits for most of the retail locations also makes the network more reliable.

A significant amount of new capabilities, including monitoring, integrated security, a scalable WAN with more bandwidth, and much better performing network are among the changes.

The organisation can now look to segment a lot of sites, or networks, to cater for future contractor and third-party requirements.

PERTH

ADELAIDE

MELBOURNE

SYDNEY

BRISBANE

Counting cost efficiency and transformation

With SDwan[4] the customer now has an agile and secure managed WAN across 40 Sites, serving more than 600 staff Australia-wide.

The new network management approach immediately delivered greater cost efficiencies by no longer depending on MPLS tails at all sites to access core services.

"The customer could see for the first time the traffic traversing over the Internet rather than MPLS links. In doing so we could build a template for sites we would roll out quickly, connecting them to both private cloud and SaaS apps," Tannous said.

Better reporting and visibility into metrics now allow the IT team to effectively troubleshoot and analyse capacity in real time. A single pane of glass and centralised management in the cloud makes identification of issues easier, enabling faster identification of incident causes.

In addition, SDwan[4] is delivering a more optimised application experience to staff connecting to major SaaS applications, an important goal of the project.

The network now better copes with an increase in mobile staff by delivering more automation and service efficiency across all sites. This fixes long provisioning delays as one of biggest problems was not being able to activate staff sitting at branch without having to physically send someone onsite.

By engaging a single MSP to manage the Telstra WAN and Cisco Meraki infrastructure, technical in-house staff are no longer burdened by an inconsistent, insecure network, and can focus on delivering strategic collaboration initiatives and service improvements instead of day-to-day operational tasks.

"Consolidation of all their collaboration tools under one network allows the business take advantage of hybrid telephony solutions that's not necessary dependent on private networks," Tannous said.

Customer:
National property management company with large branch office network

Challenge:
A mix of suppliers for a national network leaving it inefficient and insecure

Approach:
Transform company network with new managed SDwan[4]

Outcomes:
Secure, manageable SD-WAN with rapid site deployment, better reporting and a platform for cloud access and collaboration

Suppliers:
Secure Agility, Telstra, Cisco Meraki

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