FORTUNE 500 INSURANCE CARRIER

CASE STUDY: Fortune 500 Insurance Carrier Turns to APX Net for High-Bandwidth Annuities

This Fortune 500 provider of risk management products and services has a growing number of corporate offices, operations facilities and service centers throughout North America. It's a well-known brand and pioneer in the insurance sector with thousands of employees and millions of customers who depend on it to mitigate unexpected and sometimes devastating losses. In this business environment, employees are in constant contact with each other and their customers. Terabytes of data are transmitted over the organization's private network daily, making reliable, high-speed connectivity imperative.

Challenge
The insurance company was constrained by an aging and expensive Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) network that was becoming both difficult to manage and modify to satisfy changing priorities at various existing and new locations. The company also was encumbered with multiple carrier contracts and invoices for services supporting offices throughout North America.

Objective
Company stakeholders were looking for more bandwidth and a solution that would save time, money and hassle. They decided to do what many enterprises are doing today: transition their network from MPLS to Software-Defined Wide Area Networking (SD-WAN). They expected the newer and more flexible technology to decrease network complexity and enable the company to optimize traffic flows for performance and cost at various branch locations.

Their plan was to provide site-to-site connectivity via SD-WAN over Dedicated Internet Access (DIA) at nine different locations across North America. The company secured the SD-WAN vendor and issued a request for proposal (RFP) for DIA with a few goals in mind:

- Link all locations with bullet-proof connectivity
- Boost Internet bandwidth to accommodate growth
- Transition to new solution without interruption of service
- Simplify network, contract and invoice management

Solution
A subagent with MicroCorp, a value-added master agent for telecommunications, data center and cloud solutions, contacted John Howlett, APX Net's channel sales manager, about participating in the RFP process. The two had met a few weeks earlier at MicroCorp's One on One event. The agent thought APX Net, a carrier agnostic network provider with a reputation for delivering high-bandwidth connectivity in hard-to-reach locations, presented a compelling solution for his client. Although most of the nine sites in the RFP were in major metros, the company was expanding and planning to open offices in more remote areas.

"After having some initial dialogue with the agent, we knew this project was well suited for our expertise," said Howlett. "We could easily deliver connectivity at the metro sites and ensure the turn-up of rural sites without breaking the bank."

After vetting participating network providers and proposed solutions, the insurance company opted to choose two carriers – one to handle the primary circuits at each location, and one to handle backup circuits for redundancy. APX Net was selected to provide the primary circuits.

Results
Within weeks, all nine sites were turned up with high-speed Internet -- from 50Mbps to 250Mbps depending on the needs of specific locations. APX Net also consolidated the customer's carrier billing to streamline invoicing and payment processing.

"Prior to the first bill going out, the APX Net team handling the account reviewed it against carrier contracts to make sure the charges were accurate," said Jeff Wood, APX Net's president of sales. "The agent and client thought that was a nice value-add. But what really surprised them was that APX Net does proactive, ongoing bill review for their customers. That's unique; most service providers working with multiple carriers don't sustain the scrubbing of invoices like we do. We dedicate the resources to do that because billing discrepancies discovered after the fact can be a real headache for customers and take months or years to rectify with credits."

Since the initial deployment, the customer has tasked APX Net with lighting an additional five locations – some of them in remote, hard-to-reach areas in the Northwest and Canada. But there's an added requirement. APX Net has been asked to deliver both primary and secondary circuits for the new sites – and it's already paying dividends.

Two of the sites are extremely difficult to reach and require new builds. One of them is particularly challenging. APX Net was able to secure the primary connection without any trouble, but it couldn't secure a secondary connection for a reasonable price. All available network providers priced the job at more than $100,000 to build. APX Net went back to its underlying providers several times, finally convincing a utility company to run fiber to the location for less than half of what others would charge.

Ultimately, APX Net's expertise and persistence is helping one of the largest insurance carriers in the world expand and better serve their customers while offloading administrative hours related to carrier management and invoice auditing, processing and payment.

"APX Net isn't a household name, but our team is very knowledgeable and has incredible commitment when it comes to delivering for customers," said Howlett. "That's why stakeholders with this insurance company did what so many new customers do after working with us: They made us their go-to network provider. They're no longer interested in getting bids from carriers. They just give us a call. It's very gratifying that one of the world's largest insurance companies places so much of trust in us."