Real estate services leader retires branch routers, strengthens security with unified SD-WAN edge platform

silver peak ®

Company gains WAN efficiency and assures network uptime for hundreds of global offices with Unity EdgeConnect

For home buyers and sellers alike, everything about the real estate transaction ultimately hinges on a successful closing. It can be a complex process, but it doesn't have to be unpleasant. That's something this leading real estate services company has continually emphasized by bringing a personal approach to every customer engagement.

With more than 500 branch offices across the U.S., Canada, and Europe, fostering personal customer relationships to achieve successful real estate

transactions requires effective communication and reliable access to applications. However, the company's existing MPLS network was oversubscribed, which caused frequent circuit outages and office downtime. The quality of voice service over the network was especially poor, and because the company periodically relocates branch offices based on where the real estate market is either hot or cool, circuit quality was inconsistent from one location to the next.

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

INCREASED AVAILABLE BANDWIDTH 100X

CUT SITE DEPLOYMENT TIME 60%

STRENGTHENED WAN SECURITY

The director of IT notes, "We needed to standardize our edge configurations across the board to ensure more consistent network service and simplify office moves. We saw SD-WAN as the way to meet this objective."

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We hear from the offices all the time how much of a difference the SD-WAN has made in their quality of experience. With EdgeConnect, we just don't have downtime due to WAN outages anymore, which helps improve employee productivity and enable staff to serve our clients more efficiently.

— Director of IT, Global Real Estate Services Company

Choosing an SD-WAN vendor based on trust

After testing product offerings from VeloCloud, Meraki, and Silver Peak, the IT team determined that the Unity EdgeConnect™ SD-WAN edge platform from Silver Peak provided everything the company needed—and more. Its telecommunications manager remarks, "EdgeConnect has more features and capabilities than the other competitors, which make a big difference when you need to get all the performance and reliability you can out of the WAN. It's critical to application performance and delivering the highest quality of experience to our users."

The IT director adds that ultimately choosing Silver Peak was fundamentally a relationship-based decision. "We were a fairly early adopter of SD-WAN, and Silver Peak gave us confidence they'd support us any time we needed help. We just didn't have that level of trust with the other vendors."

Improved application performance, higher quality of experience

To date, this real estate services company has deployed the EdgeConnect platform in 240 branch locations and is actively working to complete the rollout to all 500-plus sites. Each site in the SD-WAN has been moved off of 1.5 Mbps MPLS circuits onto much faster broadband—typically a 10 Mbps Dedicated Internet Access (DIA) link bonded with 100 Mbps cable broadband. In addition to advanced SD-WAN capabilities such as path conditioning, quality of service, and dynamic path control provided on the EdgeConnect platform, the IT team also implemented the optional Unity Boost™ WAN optimization performance pack to accelerate key applications, such as Citrix-delivered ResWare title production software, and to overcome physical distance limitations at certain sites.

The telecommunications manager elaborates, "In offices where we still have some poorly performing legacy IT or circuits that don't provide quite enough bandwidth, we just turn on Boost and everything looks really fast to the end user. Users notice the difference in performance everywhere we use Boost."

With 100 times more bandwidth and sub-millisecond circuit failover, network service quality and application performance have improved dramatically. The telecommunications manager notes, "Using both circuits simultaneously with EdgeConnect, we can now deliver great quality voice service over broadband."

The IT director adds, "We hear from our offices all the time how much of a difference SD-WAN has made in their quality of experience. With EdgeConnect, we just don't have downtime due to WAN outages anymore, which helps improve employee productivity and enable staff to serve our clients more efficiently."

Importantly, when network issues do arise, the team uses Unity Orchestrator™ to quickly pinpoint the cause. "With Orchestrator we can see the exact source and destination IP," says the telecommunications manager. "There's no more need to dig deep into router logs as in the past. The information is just right there in front of our eyes and easy to access, which allows us to resolve issues much faster."

Built-in routing simplifies edge management

At all the sites where EdgeConnect is deployed, the real estate services company has been able to retire its traditional branch routers. According to the IT director, "The advantage of using the routing interoperability within EdgeConnect is that it standardizes our WAN edge. Instead of manually configuring and managing routers at each site, we can centrally manage branch sites and automate deployment and configuration tasks, which frees up a lot of time we can spend on other important projects."

In addition, the stateful, zone-based firewall within EdgeConnect brought network security to the branch locations, which previously did not have firewalls. In fact, the IT team can now segment traffic to create secure LAN-to-WAN-to-WAN zones using the EdgeConnect firewall. This is crucial for applications such as ResWare.

"We have to comply with industry regulations and follow even broader security requirements of the banks we work with," says the IT director. "We can now demonstrate that we have strong security not just in our data centers, but also at our branch locations."

Moreover, with security at the WAN edge, the branch offices can now break out directly to SaaS applications like Microsoft Office 365 and WebEx, rather than backhauling that traffic to the data center for internet access. This reduced WAN traffic, improving access to business applications and data housed in the corporate data center.

Streamlined remote site deployments

The EdgeConnect platform also streamlined office moves. Through Orchestrator, the IT team can use configuration templates to deploy and migrate sites in a fraction of the time previously needed. "We can bring up a branch location on the SD-WAN in two or three hours," says the telecommunications manager. "With EdgeConnect, it's just plug and play. Anyone can do it, so we don't need a specialized engineer on site at each branch office. In the past it could take 10 hours and involved a lot of manual configuration."

This template-driven approach aligns well with the IT director's vision for the future where the company's WAN is fully automated and self-managing. "With the rich APIs that Silver Peak provides, we can automate a lot of network tasks. For example, if such and such an event happens, take this action. That's where the future lies for network engineers, and EdgeConnect provides us the platform to realize this kind of self-driving wide area network."

For more information on Silver Peak and our solutions, please visit: silver-peak.com

Customer

This global real estate services company, which provides residential and commercial title insurance and settlement services, is one of the world's largest title companies, working with customers throughout the U.S. and in more than 75 countries around the world.

Challenge

The company needed to standardize its WAN edge to improve efficiency and deliver higher levels of network performance, reliability, and security.

Solution

The company deployed the EdgeConnect SD-WAN edge platform at more than 200 branch locations and is actively rolling out the EdgeConnect platform to 500-plus sites. Each site is terminated with a 10 Mbps DIA link bonded with 100 Mbps cable broadband. The company takes full advantage of the routing interoperability and stateful zone-based firewall built into the EdgeConnect platform. In addition, the company implemented the optional Unity Boost WAN optimization performance pack to accelerate key applications.

Results

> Gained 100 times more available bandwidth, increasing application performance dramatically

> Accelerated remote site deployments from 10 hours to less than 3 hours

> Enabled secure local internet breakout for more efficient, lower-latency access to SaaS applications

> Delivered high quality of service and assured uptime for voice over broadband

> Retired branch routers for improved WAN edge efficiency and simplified management

> Simplified troubleshooting with detailed, real-time insights into traffic flows

> Improved employee productivity and efficiency to deliver an enjoyable real estate closing for customers

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