

Big Boy Serves Up Success Through E-Learning



Industry
Restaurant

Locations
Over 100 stores across the US

Founded
1936

Website
bigboy.com

Ecessa Product
WANworX

THE COMPANY

Big Boy Restaurants, headquartered in Warren, Michigan, is currently growing with over 100 stores, a third of which are company owned locations that utilize Ecessa solutions. The company has been an Ecessa customer for over ten years and their needs have shifted with changes in the industry.

Today, restaurants rely on Internet connections for operations-critical tasks such as taking online orders, processing payments, tracking sales, taking reservations, ordering food, keeping track of inventory and interacting with a corporate office or headquarters.

“We use our WAN links to run credit card transactions, employee time cards, inventory, internal and external communication,” said David Germain, Senior IT Manager for Big Boy Restaurants.

THE CHALLENGE

The restaurant industry is fast-paced and individual stores have to keep up with corporate policies and procedures, federal regulations and competition. Because of the ever-changing environment, learning is an important aspect of every restaurant. In order to have well-tuned teams that work together and provide a consistent experience at every restaurant, training is vital.

Now, instead of passing around printed manuals and outdated workbooks, e-Learning tools give employees up-to-date information and training while tracking their progress and performance in real-time. When changes are needed, updates to the program can be made instantly instead of waiting for a new print version of a manual or workbook.

When asked what the biggest change in his job has been in the past year, Germain said that implementing and keeping up with online learning and tools has been their most significant initiative. “We’re really using what’s available online, whether it’s streaming video for training or webinars. In the past, you’d get a paper handout in the mail or download a book online. Everything is moving towards e-Learning. We are continuing to evolve and change.”

The trend towards e-Learning requires efficient networks that can stay connected and provide enough bandwidth to accommodate these programs. “When we started putting stores on broadband years ago, we didn’t need as much available bandwidth. Now with bandwidth-intensive things, our network is much more important. E-Mail and e-Learning are now vital to day-to-day operations,” said Germain.

LOW

cost

LOW

maintenance

HIGH

reliability

THE SOLUTION

To help keep up with the growing demands of the industry and a growing number of Big Boy Restaurants and employees, the company utilizes Ecessa's WANworX for reliable failover and a WAN solution that can handle major bandwidth needs. "One of the things we provide to our stores is an easy way to communicate. The solution designed with Ecessa for a low-cost, low-maintenance, reliable failover solution for our stores was key," said Germain.

Big Boy uses two broadband connections and a T1 circuit at headquarters. At the stores they are using 70% cable and 30% DSL, with wireless for backup. "We have cheap bandwidth available at the stores and Ecessa helps us use it," said Germain. "We use wireless LTE as failover, and it's almost too good to be true, it's so seamless."

During the installation phase, Ecessa's support team worked closely with Big Boy Restaurants. According to Germain, "After the first 10 stores were installed the rest went like clockwork." The total project took two months, much of which was proof of concept. They took care of headquarters first, then implemented geographically close stores, worked out issues, then rolled out aggressively at the rest of the stores. WANworX was a piece of the overall project, which included other hardware and software as well. "The roll out went very, very well," said Germain.

The relationship between Ecessa and Big Boy helps to ensure the support needed by the organization to continue growth. "I need personal support and somebody that understands our needs, my name, and that I'm not a number. Ecessa's support has been fantastic. They are true aces when it comes to support."

THE RESULTS

Using the Ecessa solution, Big Boy has accomplished several goals:

- Provide uptime and available bandwidth to support e-Learning in each Big Boy location.
- Remain online around the clock to run credit card transactions, manage employee time cards and track inventory.
- Allow communication between each store location and headquarters.
- Use an affordable solution that will not compromise their growing needs.

"Between price of hardware, service offered, functionality, feature set, support, and sales team, Ecessa came out ahead. I would invite anybody to take that challenge as well," said Germain. "[Ecessa] is all we use. We have Ecessa devices in each one of our stores. We use Ecessa's products to make each one of our stores remote offices connected securely to our corporate office, which gives us a balance of usability versus control."

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