

Admiral Beverage: Evolving with Technology



Industry

Beverage production and distribution

HQ Location

Worland, Wyoming

Founded

1947

Cool Facts

2012 Bottler of the Year
Produce 48 flavors
Nearly 1,600 SKUs

Website

www.admiralbeverage.com

Ecessa Product

ShieldLink

THE COMPANY

Admiral Beverage Corporation produces and distributes PepsiCo and Dr Pepper Snapple Group brands, and distributes MillerCoors brands, across nine states through its 35 locations. It may not seem like it at first glance, but a logistics company like Admiral Beverage must adapt and evolve with the times in order to stay in business.

THE CHALLENGE

Jim Hill is Director of IT at Admiral Beverage and has been with the company for 29 years. Hill realized that Admiral Beverage's wide area network connections and equipment were holding the company back. "We ran on a single 1.5 MB line which was really bad bandwidth," said Hill. "For a company? That's really poor."

Working not only with slow connection speeds but also on a single line meant that if the connection dropped, Admiral Beverage went offline. "We need connectivity with redundancy, so if the Internet goes down the company doesn't go down," said Hill.

As a manufacturer and distributor, Admiral Beverage is also in a challenging position in that its locations were not selected based on broadband signal strength.

"I have sites that have really bad Internet connections. When they build a warehouse, they don't think about Internet. They think of low cost and access to a freeway. Because physically our locations are so far from Internet hubs, we're stuck with twisted pair copper telephone wires to run DSL lines."

In addition, security was a key concern. "We value privacy and keeping our data traffic safe when it goes over public internet lines," said Hill.

Hill needed to upgrade his outdated equipment, combine geographically available telecommunications links to increase Admiral Beverage's bandwidth, make them perform well, ensure data security and add redundancy. He also needed to keep his business operating at its best at a fair price, using equipment compatible with Admiral Beverage's existing devices.

Tall order? Not for someone who understands the need to keep evolving.

THE SOLUTION

When it was time for Admiral Beverage to replace their outdated equipment, Hill shopped price quotes. He said, "I was really depressed because I couldn't get good pricing. [The existing provider] didn't want to budge on pricing, even though it came with low bandwidth. So, I looked in the marketplace and found Ecessa."

Ecessa met all of his goals at the price point he needed, including compatibility, so Hill upgraded the company's network to Ecessa. "Ecessa talks to our old equipment. We run tunnels between them, using internet lines, and at a low cost. Ecessa does everything our old platform does and saves us money. And, because of the compatibility, we can phase in units over time."

THE RESULTS

The Ecessa units combine communication links to give Admiral Beverage the reliability they need. "We can take multiple poor lines and have one good line. Ecessa gives us one good pipe of data," said Hill. Failover for redundancy is seamless. "At a location we have two or three redundant lines. This allows us to stay up and running, allows us to create VPN tunnels back to headquarters and allows the company to stay online."

"There are a lot of times I'll have a line down and not even notice it because the redundancy keeps the others up and running. It's very nice."

Hill has also found ways to use Ecessa that weren't on his original requirements list.

"We use Ecessa for VoIP. We're doing a VPN tunnel between us and a cloud provider for voice. Ecessa talks to other non-Ecessa devices. We've been very successful getting tunnels to connect to non-like products."

Through Ecessa's help, Jim Hill has adapted Admiral Beverage so that it's in position to evolve with, and even ahead of, the times.

"Over time, things evolve. About 15 years ago you'd be lucky to get a 1 Meg line, now I need a 100 Meg line. Ecessa gives us capability," said Hill. "As technology moves, you think back to 56k, now we're talking hundreds of megabytes. What's it going to be five years from now? Ecessa prepares us for that."

"As a company, we need to evolve with technology. I see Ecessa giving us the potential to evolve in that way."

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