ECESSA®

Terminal Supply Co.
A phased deployment approach ensured network reliability and connectivity.

Industry
Distribution

Locations
Troy, MI
Schaumberg, IL
Minneapolis, MN
Grand Rapids, MI
Kingman, AZ
Cleveland, OH
St. Louis, MO

Founded
1966

Cool Fact
Terminal Supply stocks over 30,000 different items for immediate shipment

Website
www.terminalsupplyco.com

Ecessa Product
PowerLink®

Technology Partners
C-Net Systems and Telegration

Terminal Supply Company, headquartered in Troy, Michigan, is a full line distributor of solderless electrical terminals, wire and vehicle maintenance items.

The company's seven locations throughout the Midwest and Arizona all connect through the Troy home office, so having reliable communication is vital. That's why the company originally set up a Sprint MPLS network. Over time, the MPLS network proved insufficient for the organization's needs and was scheduled to be phased out at the end of 2018. Terminal Supply's IT consulting partner, C-Net Systems (C-Net), saw the impending change as an opportunity to update and improve the network.

Saying Goodbye to MPLS

Transitioning an entire organization off an MPLS network is a big, complicated project. What makes it easier to manage? Finding a solution that doesn't require a forklift upgrade and that can be deployed in phases. That's exactly what technology partners Telegration and C-Net did for Terminal Supply.

In 2016, C-Net initiated a two-year project to migrate Terminal Supply's WAN to something better and more affordable. C-Net worked with Telegration to provision new circuits and find the right technology to tie the independent ISP connections together securely and reliably. "We originally thought to do VPNs site to site, but quickly realized that would be overly complex and costly," said Jeff Talant, Lead Technician at C-Net. "The team at Telegration put together a solution with Ecessa and multiple ISP connections that made total sense."

Terminal Supply's branch locations serve as endpoints and are lean on hardware. Branches don't have servers, just workstations. All traffic, including file sharing and application data, routes back to the Troy home office through the AS400 server. "It's very efficient," said Talant. "Unless there's an outage. Once your ISP connection goes down, there go your resources."

The challenge became how to provide the same quality of service as MPLS, preferably better and at a lower cost, using ISP connections.

Successful Deployments Start by Listening

Two primary tenets of the Ecessa approach to project management are educating customers on the capabilities and possibilities of its SD-WAN functionality and getting a deep understanding of the customer environment and goals to best apply those functions.

Project management on the Terminal Supply project started during initial discovery calls among the technology partners.

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"When we were evaluating how this would work, Ecessa's engineers were there every step of the way, reinforcing the value of their solution," said Talant. "They provided a network schematic to mock up how it would look, and we never had an issue where our questions went unanswered."

Once the decision was made and units were shipped, project management kicked into high gear. "We used a series of project meetings to keep everyone abreast of where we were in the process and what steps were remaining," said Rick Berens, Systems Architect at Ecessa.

Bonnie Houseworth, project manager at Telegration, had not worked with SDWAN technology prior to this project, so having Ecessa's engineering support to help the agent was critical. "Terminal Supply uses services from Comcast, Time Warner, AT&T, Frontier and Granite. Logistics among the locations were difficult, but Ecessa's engineers were so hands-on and easy to get a hold of," said Houseworth. "Their problem solving was excellent. I was a witness to great customer service and great order implementation."

The Experience Factor

An important differentiator in Ecessa's Project Management approach is experience. Ecessa engineers understand the many moving parts and challenges that can surface during a deployment, including carrier delays, new circuits not performing as expected, scheduling maintenance windows and so much more -- all while striving to meet a project completion timeline. Every issue has the potential to knock the project off schedule. Ecessa's phased deployment approach is designed to help technology partners anticipate and uncover any possible network issues and resolve them before going live. It drives project implementation around obstacles to meet the set launch goal.

"We started with a test implementation in Michigan," said Alan Thomas, IT Support Specialist at C-Net Systems. "Ecessa's engineers helped us work through a few issues, such as AT&T not passing traffic correctly. Ecessa actually gave us that insight. As for physical connections, the network diagrams Ecessa provided were very detailed and accurate. It was very simple to get things working."

C-Net did the first few deployments on site and conducted the remaining installations remotely. "The network diagrams provided an easy way for us to work with the branches to hook up the rest of the Ecessa units. With guidance, we had people with zero technical experience completing the remote installations," said Thomas.

Ecessa's forward thinking, big picture approach provides partners and their onsite resources with predictable, repeatable results.

"Ecessa exceeded our expectations," said Talant. "I was very impressed by Ecessa's project management, documentation and taking extra steps to dig deeper into the network."

Visit www.ecessa.com for more success stories.

"I cannot thank you enough for your help and guidance through this process. You have been a shining example of the support that I expected to receive and you over delivered."

Jeff Talant
C-Net Systems

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