

Aurivo Co-operative Society Limited

How a large Irish co-operative used Managed WAN and Managed Firewall for fast, reliable and secure connectivity in over 40 locations.

CHALLENGE

Aurivo is a multipurpose agricultural co-operative spanning dairy ingredients, consumer foods, agri-stores, animal feed and livestock. It has 40 retail outlets and garden centres across the West and North of Ireland, including 33 under the Homeland brand.

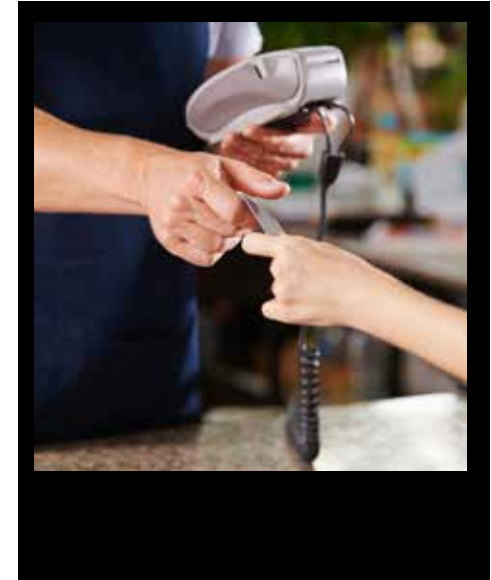
Aurivo's old multiprotocol label switching (MPLS) network had been experiencing service interruptions for some time, which was having a direct business impact. The company's retail system is centrally hosted, and regular network interruptions were causing customer service issues. Affected stores went without access to price lists whenever access was down, leaving staff to record transactions in docket books. Patchy broadband also negatively affected the staff perception of the retail system.

David O'Sullivan, Head of IT at Aurivo explains, "It got to the point where there were so many service issues with our network, we decided to look at alternatives." The company considered several vendors across a range of criteria. High-speed connectivity to each store was a priority, along with a resilient automatic backup connection to cover service outages. Security was another pressing issue. Aurivo wanted a centrally hosted firewall to enable protected access for all sites on its network. David continues, "Three's organisational culture closely matches our own, and that was as important to us as the price. Three's ability to deliver, and their approach to account management and customer service were also critical for us."

SOLUTION

Aurivo chose Three to provide a robust, high-speed, managed wide area network (WAN) to all 40 outlets. This gives Aurivo more control and reduces connectivity costs. Each site also has backup links over the Three cellular network for added resilience. Three manages the network end-to-end and constantly monitors it from its Limerick service centre. Quality of Service (QoS) also ensures centrally hosted applications are available to all sites on Aurivo's network.

In addition, Three provided a managed firewall for Aurivo that allows all sites to connect to the internet in a controlled, managed way. This gives David's team visibility of all application activity on the network, improving security by identifying possible risks.



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BENEFITS

Any large IT or telecoms migration can give an organisation pause, which is why Three carefully scopes the project up front. Three gathered comprehensive information about Aurivo’s network infrastructure before starting the project, and developed a clear plan to minimise disruption. “From the very get-go, the Three team was head and shoulders above everyone else in terms of approach, professionalism and the amount of focus they gave to the solution,” explains David. “They were getting into the detailed design from early on, and really wanted to understand what we were doing as a business. They were very easy to deal with. Our IT team agreed a checklist with Three for the rollout, so when they went to each store there was a scripted install and it was one visit per store. The rollout was very quick; it was less than 10 weeks for more than 40 locations.”

RESULT

David describes the WAN upgrade as “seamless”, which was critical for a company with a relatively small IT team. “It was very important from our point of view that the implementation worked first time, that it was low maintenance and that all the planning and preparation paid off. Immediately, we started to experience the Three service centre – they were exceptionally attentive, and since we’ve gone live, it’s a low, or no, maintenance service from our perspective. We have zero buyer’s remorse,” David reports.

“The retail system was failing to perform as effectively as we would have liked because our old WAN was unreliable. Due to the way Three configured its service, 3G backup and 4G backup in some locations, we will know if a site’s network is down because Three tells us – not because the store tells us. That’s exactly what we want: to manage by exception. Users expect IT to work all the time.”

In addition to better functioning systems, more satisfied staff, more control and reduced costs, David says his IT team is now free to focus on strategic issues instead of firefighting technical problems. “The WAN is supposed to be a utility, it’s supposed to be there when you want it, and with the Three solution, that’s what we’ve got now. The first thing is to get all the ‘plumbing’ right, so it doesn’t get in the way of the strategic conversation about how IT can contribute to projects like business process e-engineering, or helping to drive revenue and profit for the business.”

To find out more.
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