THE BAY CLUB DELIVERS BUSINESS AGILITY AND RAPID BRANCH DEPLOYMENT WITH SD-WAN

INDUSTRY
HOSPITALITY

HEADQUARTERS
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

CHALLENGES

- Mergers and acquisition integration delayed and impacted business growth
- Service deployments in new locations hindered by branch network availability
- High cost of network ownership

RESULTS

- Accelerated IT reliable provisioning of new clubs from months to just a few days
- Significantly improved service quality and availability
- Greatly reduced costs associated with device rental, upgrades, and management
- Gained centralized management to enhance operations

In Need of IT Agility

The Bay Club has expanded rapidly through acquisition, doubling its size in 2015 and expects to double again by 2017. One of the company's challenges is to rapidly integrate new clubs in order to retain existing members, deliver The Bay Club's signature club experience quickly, and attract new members. IT plays a major role in the integration process and The Bay Club's ability to sustain rapid growth.

The Bay Club relies on a Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) WAN to connect its locations. IT delivers a member management system, Voice over IP (VoIP) capabilities, and print and file services over the WAN. Each location has its own retail system. Over the past several years, the IT team has moved to Software as a Service (SaaS) and cloud-based applications when possible to reduce costs and simplify management. However, guest users consume approximately 70 percent of WAN bandwidth across the clubs, with anywhere from 100 to 1000 users online at any given time.

"As we grow, network cost of ownership becomes increasingly critical," said Mark Street, IT Director at The Bay Club. "We began looking for a way to contain or reduce networking costs while gaining more flexibility to accelerate new deployments."

Flexibility is essential. When The Bay Club acquires a new location, that location might have Internet connectivity options ranging anywhere from basic DSL circuits to high-speed fiber access. IT must be able to quickly and easily install network circuits and connect to whatever link is available.

Agility is also important. On average, it took approximately 90 days to deploy new MPLS circuits. Not only is this lead time unacceptable, MPLS circuits are expensive. Many locations do not have fiber available so installing MPLS links is not even an option. The Bay Club had to find another solution.

The IT team also needs the ability to control its club infrastructure remotely. With one staff member in Los Angeles and only three in San Francisco, staff would have to travel to different clubs, which was also expensive. IT has consistently tried to implement processes, applications, and services that support remote management to avoid incurring travel time and costs. And as The Bay Club considers locations outside of California, this requirement becomes even more important.

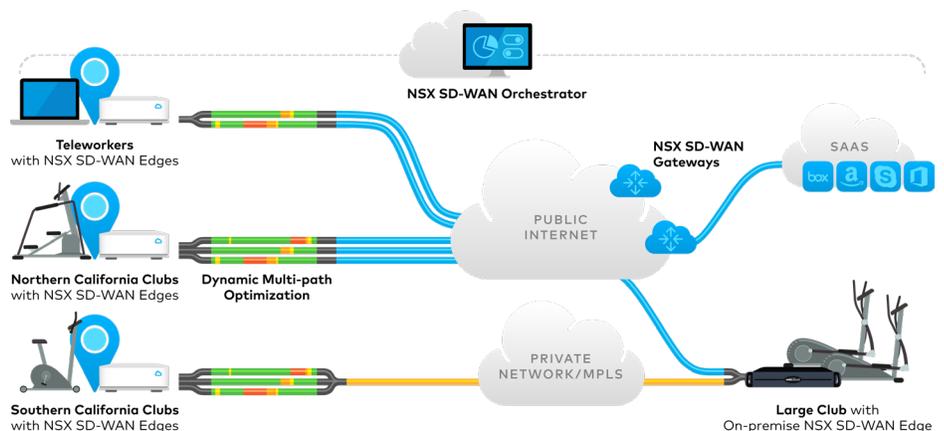**vm**ware®

A VMware SD-WAN by VeloCloud Solution

The Bay Club team tested a number of cloud-managed branch with low management requirements. Only VMware SD-WAN™ by VeloCloud® offered the low touch, configurability, and flexibility that met The Bay Club's requirements.

VMware SD-WAN simplifies branch office networking while assuring optimal application performance. By separating control plane and data plane layers, it moves intelligence from the data plane into the programmable control plane for greater agility. The VMware SD-WAN architecture also operates across any combination of public or private circuits, which was essential for The Bay Club.

The real test came when The Bay Club purchased a location that had only DSL connections to the Internet. Using VMware SD-WAN in the production network, the team was able to deploy the site and deliver member services quickly.

"We also added a cable connection at this location," said Mark. "When the DSL link went down, we saw the magic of VMware SD-WAN. The site never went down."

One of the company's executives telecommutes from a remote office with a slow Internet connection. Although the team had tried several different solutions over time, phone call stability and quality were never predictable. The team delivered a VMware SD-WAN device, the executive installed it, and the phone problems disappeared, even over a single link, as shown in Figure 1.

Two Bay Club locations now use VMware SD-WAN as the firewall to secure member traffic, function as Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) relay, and integrate with the club's Layer 3 switch for MPLS traffic. At another site, the VMware SD-WAN solution completely replaced the need for MPLS connectivity—and lowered connectivity costs. Based on the extraordinary success of the first installations, VMware SD-WAN is at the forefront of The Bay Club's applications and new initiatives.

"VeloCloud is at the center of all Layer 3 links in our network, giving us redundancy and availability without the cost of additional links," said Mark. "With extensive MPLS and cable connections, we are delighted that all links are used effectively."

"When it comes to our goals of reducing cost of ownership, accelerating acquisitions, and delivering a high-quality member experience, VeloCloud enabled us to achieve them all. Bring on the growth—we're ready to handle it."

MARK STREET
IT DIRECTOR, THE BAY CLUB

Acquisitions are Accelerated

The Bay Club operations can greatly accelerate the IT portion of acquisitions. Instead of taking two to three months to simply deliver an MPLS circuit, IT can connect the new location in just a few days. At the same time, they know that the delivered network delivers high quality, performance, and availability.

Members Enjoy a High-Quality Experience

With rapid service delivery, members quickly see significant improvement in the quality of the new Bay Club experience. Service quality is higher, making it easier for the sales and marketing team to attract new members.

"The Bay Club is unique in its ability to attract families as members and keep them delighted," said Mark. "Our network is a key part of our ability to deliver that value."

Simplified Infrastructure Enhances Operations

Typically, a Bay Club location has four or five devices deployed. There is usually a Layer 3 routing device traffic, an MPLS modem or cable modem, a firewall, and other appliances. In some locations, the VeloCloud solution replaced three devices with its integrated firewall and Virtual Private Network (VPN) features. For The Bay Club, that eliminated the need to rent, upgrade, and manage those devices.

Centralized management enables zero-touch configuration and greatly simplifies management across all locations. The web-based graphical management interface and intuitive configuration enables The Bay Club IT team to quickly provision changes without having to remember a Command Line Interface (CLI) or need an admin guide.

Savings to Boot

Simplified deployment and operations enable rapid provisioning of new clubs without truck rolls, save time every day, and reduce travel costs. The Bay Club reduced bandwidth costs with VMware SD-WAN's ability to support cable and Internet links simultaneously. The club also will be able to remove MPLS circuits in many locations for even greater savings.

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