



## NO POWER, NO CARRIER LINE, NO PROBLEM WITH SD-WAN



### INDUSTRY

RETAIL

### HEADQUARTERS

SPRINGFIELD, MO

### CHALLENGES

- Lack of visibility created reactive network issues resolution
- Long deployment times reducing ability to transact
- Dependence on carrier lines limited retail location placement

### RESULTS

- Comprehensive network visibility to every branch location
- Constant uptime, even through natural disasters
- Expedited retail deployments
- Fast and easy network-wide changes
- Enabled conversion to new VoIP phone infrastructure

Traditional MPLS was preventing Salon Service Group from deploying stores quickly and gaining network visibility. SD-WAN changed all that.

### Problem Situation

Salon Service Group distributes hair salon products, currently supporting 30 store locations across 11 states. The company's headquarters is located in Springfield, Missouri, housing business critical applications including the ERP system for processing all transactions, servers, and the primary phone system. All transactions processed at local stores are transmitted from the remote locations back to Salon Services Group headquarters and through the ERP system. Retail branches are located in Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin.

Four years ago, Salon Service Group relied on traditional MPLS as its primary transport for all transactions and communications between headquarters and retail stores and between retail locations. This required fiber lines to be run to the main offices and several carrier lines to each remote location.

Management of the network was handled entirely by its existing service provider with very little network visibility and control provided to Salon Service Groups' internal IT team. The team had limited access to its user portal, and only for minor changes and little to no control over the network reaching the retail locations. All network issues required that a support ticket be opened with the provider and resolution to problems would often take days to occur. Ad hoc changes were difficult to make and implement. And if there was an issue at any retail location, the provider would only know it had occurred when the location called in for service, resulting in reactive management.

To support its growth strategy, Salon Service Group would often acquire existing stores, bringing them into its own network. Migrating each new retail location from its current infrastructure to be part of the Salon Service Group was a long and painful experience, often taking as long as two months.

As Salon Service Group began to increase its footprint and acquire additional store locations in other states, it realized that its existing infrastructure was not flexible enough or provided enough bandwidth to enable the growth. It sought out solutions that would provide:

- Network visibility and proactive management
- Quick retail branch deployments
- Business continuity and increased network performance
- Enable faster transactions between retail branches and headquarters

“The IT team doesn’t hear the phone ring nearly as often now that we have SD-WAN deployed network-wide.”

CHRIS RUSHTON  
PROJECT DIRECTOR, SALON SERVICE GROUP

## Solution Selection and Implementation: Nexio Technologies and VMware SD-WAN™ by VeloCloud®

Working with service provider Nexio Technologies, Salon Service Group sought out other solutions that would deliver the requirements and vision it had for its network. After evaluating several vendors and connection options, including retaining usage of the incumbent MPLS, it decided that a migration to a cloud-delivered SD-WAN solution would satisfy all requirements.

Nexio Technologies helped Salon Service Group leverage VMware SD-WAN by VeloCloud, including access to the VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator for centralized management and control, and VMware SD-WAN Edges at each retail branch.

Salon Service Group began the migration to SD-WAN in its retail stores, placing a VMware SD-WAN Edge at each location and connecting it to the cloud-delivered VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator, where both Nexio Technologies and Salon Service Group’s IT team could access it. Using carrier lines and the Internet, all retail branches can quickly, easily, safely, and consistently send transaction information to the primary data center.

## Network Visibility

Using the VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator, Salon Service Group’s IT team now has complete network visibility through a centralized and single pane of glass. The team are able to view the performance and health of all circuits across all connections for every site.

## Constant Uptime, Even through Natural Disasters

Ensuring that retail stores remain online at all times and being able to transact is critically important to the bottom line. VMware SD-WAN ensures that stores are able to continue to transact even when there are power issues or physical connections are terminated. For instance, when Hurricane Harvey wrecked havoc in Texas in August 2017, much the power grid was affected, but because Salon Service Group’s retail locations had SD-WAN, business continued because 4G LTE was deployed as a backup connection.

## Expedited Retail Deployments

Prior to migrating to VMware SD-WAN, any new Salon Service Group retail location would require nearly two months to ensure that network infrastructure was in place before the store could be opened. Using SD-WAN, deployment is now quick and greatly simplified as Salon Service Group can have a VMware SD-WAN Edge shipped to the new site, a 4G LTE instance set up, connected to the VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator and configuration completed within minutes. When the permanent carrier line is ready, it is simply plugged into the VMware SD-WAN Edge with no disruption to the network. With 4G LTE as an option, Salon Service Group is able to open more stores, with no restriction on location.

## Fast and Easy Network-wide Changes

With its old network infrastructure, all network changes had to be funneled to its previous management organization, and would go into a long queue to be prioritized amongst its other customers, causing a long delay. With VMware SD-WAN, the process of making changes to any area of the network is now greatly simplified, allowing IT to make a policy or rule modification in the VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator and it’s instantly populated across all connected edges.

“Our traditional network was creating obstacles that prohibited us from serving our internal customers well, but with SD-WAN we now have the visibility and flexibility to move from being a reactive organization to a proactive one.”

CHRIS RUSHTON  
PROJECT DIRECTOR, SALON SERVICE GROUP

---

### Conversion to VoIP Phones to All Retail Locations

Salon Service Group had a central IP phone system deployed at its headquarters, but all retail locations were using a mixture of voice services including regular phone lines, cellular, and several cloud carriers. Several locations had poor voice call quality over MPLS due to high latency and jitter. With an initiative to convert all retail locations to the same IP phone system that headquarters was using, Salon Service Group knew that quality issues would persist unless the IT team could improve and monitor the voice quality of service (QoS), specifically for jitter and latency.

Using multiple WAN carriers, Salon Service Group used VMware SD-WAN Edges and the VMware SD-WAN Orchestrator to provide the reliable network needed to confidently deploy IP phones across all retail locations. Retail stores now had access to more calling features, were directly connected to management at the headquarters office, and saved long-term cost with fewer voice lines needed overall.

