WE

Welded together by success

Arc3® Gases is a family-owned business whose scope has evolved dramatically over the years fueled by a series of mergers and acquisitions. Today, the company distributes a wide range of welding supplies and industrial gases to more than 70K delivery points across the Southeast. Customers include restaurant chains, entertainment venues and medical facilities. A key factor in the company's success has been an unwavering commitment to exemplary service and providing excellent products by their experienced, dedicated employees. Merging with another company created challenges that overwhelmed the capabilities of the existing network and severely compromised customer experience.

At a glance

ARC3
G A S E S

Industry

Industrial Gases

Customer

Headquarters: Dunn, NC, with 52 retail locations in 4 states

500+ employees

70K+ active delivery points

Challenges

Converging networks and multiple vendors

Poor application performance

Unacceptable voice quality

Inadequate network resiliency

Solutions

SD-WAN Concierge™

Managed Network Security

UCaaS

Ethernet and Cable connections

BYOB LTE Wireless

Results

Nearly 100% improvement in application performance and voice quality

Increased employee productivity and customer experience

Outdated technology

As a retailer, network availability and reliability are crucial for true client-server point-of-sale systems to facilitate real-time purchase transactions. The company was also dependent on voice quality for external and internal communications. Following the merger, the existing MPLS network could not support transaction or call volumes.

The incumbent network provider attempted to address the company's pain points by offering more of the same. However, it proved challenging and costly to use MPLS in rural portions of the company's footprint. As the situation became more desperate, Arc3's Scott Coats, director of information technology, declared that an evolutionary approach was failing—it was time to try something revolutionary starting with a single provider for wireline and wireless network services that could support future growth.

Trial by fire

The company was already familiar with Windstream Enterprise. According to the director, "I've had a very positive relationship with the local Windstream Enterprise network team, and they are always highly attentive to our needs with excellent follow-through in resolving our issues." Because of the good relationship Arc3 had with them and as the owner and operator of a nationwide network,

Windstream Enterprise assessed the issues, current and future needs and proposed a low-risk proof-of-concept by quickly implementing SD-WAN at just two of the company's locations.

> *"Windstream Enterprise has been a vital part of our business, enabling us to consolidate from multiple providers with multiple services to a single provider integrating our network, voice and security services."*
>
> **Scott Coats**
> Director of IT

Coats had not considered SD-WAN before the Windstream Enterprise team recommended it as a solution. He was amazed by the speed of the roll-out and the dramatic improvements in availability and performance for both the network and all dependent applications. As SD-WAN "went from zero to hero," Coats told Windstream to "bring me a truckload of these."

Post-installation, network disruptions were eliminated by leveraging existing connections—no "rip and replace" tactics were needed. Indeed, going "over the top" of existing Ethernet connections with no contractual obligations avoided abandoning assets or paying early termination charges.

These connections were paired with cost-effective cable circuits in an active/active configuration to simultaneously maximize bandwidth utilization and ensure uptime. 4G fail-over was also added in an active/passive configuration to ensure that latency-sensitive applications, including VoIP, continued to perform well and without interruption.

Completing the arc

Migrating from MPLS to SD-WAN has yielded a nearly 100% improvement in application performance. In addition to once again driving a superior experience for external customers, satisfaction and productivity levels for all employees have improved. As contractual obligations for expensive MPLS circuits lapse, greater savings will be realized by substituting more cost-effective Ethernet and cable connections.

The migration has yielded the additional benefits of a new digital experience from the WE Connect portal's "single pane of glass" which enables Coats' team to see and manage the entire network. The portal also drives productivity gains because his IT team no longer needs to sequentially log-in to disparate systems and locations to troubleshoot and resolve issues. Rolling out new business and security policies is also a much more efficient process. "Windstream Enterprise has been a vital part of our business, enabling us to consolidate from multiple providers with multiple services to a single provider integrating our network, voice and security services."

Cloud-enabled connectivity, communications and security—guaranteed.

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ENTERPRISE