WE

Manufacturer modernizes network and voice services to improve employee productivity and customer experience

With 25 locations across the southeast, Blue Water Industries (BWI) is responsible for supplying the region with materials for a wide range of construction projects. Given this, their networking and voice solutions need to be just as reliable and hardworking as their employees and customers. That's why BWI partnered with Windstream Enterprise to migrate away from outdated, undependable services to modern, IP-based solutions. Doing so would help them aggregate all of their connectivity and collaboration tools into one unified solution—all backed by one trusted provider.

At a glance

BLUE WATER INDUSTRIES

Industry

Manufacturing

Customer

100+OfficeSuite UC® seats

25 SD-WAN Concierge™ locations

8 states served in the Southeast

Challenges

Expensive and unreliable legacy POTs

Legacy T1 copper network

Frequent downtime

Limited bandwidth

Difficulty managing multiple vendors

Unresolved voice and network issues

Solutions

OfficeSuite UC

SD-WAN Concierge

High bandwidth access

Active/active configuration

WE Connect single pane of glass

Results

Improved reliability

Enhanced resiliency and uptime

Eliminated outages

Enhanced customer experience

Increased employee productivity

Currently under construction

BWI is an aggregate producer, located in the southeastern United States. With operations serving eight states in the southeast, including Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia, their top priorities are to ensure that safety always comes first, as well as to distribute high quality products with the friendliest and most accurate service.

Even as a relatively young aggregate company with five years under their belt, BWI has grown through acquisitions to a total of 25 locations. To deliver exceptional service as safely and efficiently as possible, it's crucial for BWI to be as automated as possible and ensure that business can be conducted online without interruption. "For this reason, network connectivity is very important to us," said Stephen Larson, director of IT, BWI.

Because BWI had grown significantly through acquisitions over time, the company was experiencing some hurdles with their IT technology, due to disjointed voice and network solutions.

Many of their business locations used antiquated copper T1 data network technology—which was too expensive and complicated to maintain.

BWI was also using analog phones and legacy POTS and PRI lines that had become overpriced, unreliable and were not interconnected between their locations.

Additionally, these solutions have a limited number of features that benefit end users and BWI were suffering from recurring phone outages, resulting in lost revenue and a poor customer experience.

> *"Windstream Enterprise is highly responsive to my needs and rapidly responds to my requests. They helped us get a new site up and running in just two weeks."*
>
> **Stephen Larson**
> Director of IT, BWI

Another challenge BWI experienced was their outdated connectivity solution. BWI relied on legacy copper T1 circuits, which were slow, single-threaded and caused frequent downtime. Larson recalled times where downtime would last a day or two, and the company would be forced to resort to a manual and cumbersome

ticketing process. This reduced the rate at which orders could be processed, negatively impacting their customers' experience and a decrease in workforce productivity.

For a two-person IT team at BWI, there was little time to waste managing these issues, and it had become tiresome dealing the many vendors they attained through acquisitions.

Larson recognized the time had come for BWI to modernize their networking and communications strategies by switching to modern, IP-based solutions. More importantly, it was time to streamline their services under one provider—someone they could trust. That's when BWI called upon Windstream Enterprise to help make this transition happen as quickly and easily as possible.

Constructing a solution

Windstream Enterprise started construction to BWI's network by deploying SD-WAN Concierge™ at all of their locations. They provided primary circuits and BWI provided cellular broadband on a "Bring your own bandwidth" basis. Windstream Enterprise also implemented an active/active configuration to boost network resiliency and prevent any future outages.

BWI's network was critical to supporting many on-site applications including voice communications, WiFi, cameras, intercom systems and the automated scales for ticketing. A modern network would support real-time tracking of shipments and automation.

In addition to improving network connectivity, BWI implemented OfficeSuite UC® with more than 100 seats for employees across all locations. This unified communications (UC) solution would eliminate expensive POTs and PRI lines and get rid of the need for multiple phone service vendors.

Windstream Enterprise deployed high bandwidth fiber or cable as their primary access connection. This would resolve performance issues and enable scalability, making it easy to increase bandwidth.

Disjointed experience, obliterated

Since the successful implementation of Windstream Enterprise's services, BWI immediately noticed improvements to their employees' productivity and their customers' experience.

BWI now has a reliable UC that connects across all locations and all employees. Moving from legacy voice systems to OfficeSuite UC resulted in significant cost savings. A short digital dial system now allows locations to quickly connect, and administrators can seamlessly access reporting through the WE Connect web portal.

SD-WAN with active/active configuration provided the uptime required to support all BWI's critical IP applications. Network outages are now a rare occurrence.

Larson and his team were used to spending the majority of their time resolving network and voice challenges and chasing down vendors to take corrective action. After partnering with Windstream Enterprise to help manage these solutions, BWI spends very little time worrying about these issues. Instead, they are able to focus their attention on innovations to improve BWI's business systems and operations.

"The most important benefit of our SD-WAN and OfficeSuite UC services is that they are reliable. These solutions allow our IT team to focus our attention on IT innovations instead of resolving issues."

Stephen Larson
Director of IT, BWI

Cloud-enabled connectivity, communications and security—guaranteed.