

Keelings advances its wide area network with AirSpeed Telecom

As a producer and distributor of fresh produce to Irish, UK and European markets, Keelings is a fast-moving business in every sense of the term. A determination to maintain its high standards of responsiveness and productivity saw it upgrading its group network. With improved speeds at all sites and centralised critical systems, the company has boosted business reactions and delivered real savings for the bottom line.

It was Keelings' IT centralisation programme, a 2011 initiative to bring all its key business applications into its head office in Dublin, that first prompted the company to look hard at whether its existing wide area network was still fit for purpose.

"The critical apps we use, such as ERP, email and financial applications, were becoming more bandwidth intensive," recalls Tony O'Connor, IT Manager for Keelings. *"We found that our MPLS network was restricting us and what we could do, and it was impacting the business."*

At that time all Keelings' key applications were accessed locally at its nine remote sites in Ireland and the UK, with most sites relying on WAN speeds of just 256kps. As it examined the potential of centralising its applications at head office, it was clear that a faster, more resilient network would be vital.

Keelings already had a relationship with AirSpeed Telecom, which provided the company's 10 Mbps internet connection at its Dublin headquarters. AirSpeed suggested rolling out a new WAN, based primarily on licensed wireless, designed to connect all remote sites to the company's head office at dramatically increased speeds and a lower cost – WAN costs would be 20% less than Keelings' existing network.

After considering its options, Keelings chose to move ahead with the AirSpeed proposal, which would also make

Keelings Overview

- A multinational company growing, sourcing, shipping, marketing and distributing fresh produce to Irish, UK and European markets.
- Keelings Group employs approximately 1,700 people throughout its nine business units.

The Need

- Establish a multisite, resilient wide area network that would support the Keelings IT centralisation programme and the rollout of VoIP and video conferencing company-wide.

The Solution

- A new WAN from AirSpeed Telecom using licensed wireless and fibre, connecting remote sites to the Dublin HQ

Key Benefits for Keelings

- Eightfold increase in bandwidth across the WAN, at a lower cost - WAN costs have fallen 20%
- Multi-site high-speed network supports Keelings' IT centralisation programme
- Improved access speeds makes critical business applications faster and more responsive
- Company-wide network upgrade enhances productivity at all sites, regardless of location
- Future-proofed WAN will facilitate Keelings' adoption of innovations such as SIP trunking for all voice calls, which will let Keelings retire PBX's at remote sites and eliminate most line rental costs
- Flexible network supports voice conferencing across the company, which will deliver further cost savings

better use of the existing 10 Mbps data link at head office: that connection would be expanded to carry Keelings voice calls at significantly reduced cost and would also introduce DDI numbers for all head office employees.

Rapid network rollout incorporates a range of access technologies

AirSpeed Telecom worked closely with Keelings to deliver a rapid rollout of new 2Mbps links to remote sites, and 10 Mbps in Belfast. In two locations where licensed wireless

connectivity was not possible, AirSpeed integrated fibre from alternative providers to keep the rollout on schedule. ***"We were confident that AirSpeed would work out a solution in the locations where licensed wireless wasn't available,"*** Tony says. ***"They managed the situation expertly and we experienced no delays in rollout."***

Increased bandwidth boosts productivity, responsiveness

Following the WAN upgrade, users across the Keelings network report faster performance from key applications. ***"Previously, importing and exporting data into our financial applications was time consuming,"*** Tony says. ***"Now it's instant, which means employees are more productive. It also means that data is more readily available for management, helping them make decisions more quickly. We are a just-in-time business, and getting the right information fast is critical for us."***

Future-proofed network to support voice and video conferencing

Currently, the link at Keelings head office supports voice calls, and over the coming months, voice calls will be rolled out throughout the group's WAN using SIP trunking, a new service from AirSpeed Telecom. This will allow Keelings to eliminate line rental and PBX costs across its enterprise and make savings on internal and external calls. It will also support the rollout of DDIs for remote office employees. ***"With SIP trunking we will also be able to enhance our disaster recovery plan,"*** Tony says.

"In the event of an incident at one of our sites, we'll be able to seamlessly redirect all our calls to our disaster recovery site." The company also plans to leverage the network to support companywide video conferencing for improved communications between its business units in Ireland and the UK, as well as sites in Spain and Holland.

Scalable solution adds extra level of flexibility

When required, Keelings can request short-term bandwidth boosts at its sites. ***"It's great to have the option to increase our bandwidth if we need to, and AirSpeed can do this for us on demand."***

An evolving relationship that works for Keelings

Over the past three years AirSpeed Telecom's relationship with Keelings has expanded considerably, from providing that single 10Mbps internet connection at its head office, to rolling out a high-speed enterprise WAN supporting voice and data for all its sites.

"AirSpeed Telecom has become one of our key strategic partners," says Tony. ***"Their flexibility and responsiveness has proven to be a great advantage to us. And before I even look for new solutions, like SIP trunking, AirSpeed is telling me about them. But it's also the fact that the phone's always answered, and I can speak with whoever I need to, from the engineers to the management. It's the simple things that make my job that much easier."***

