

Client Overview

A nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for and empowering individuals with disabilities. The organization's mission is to create meaningful opportunities for people with disabilities to work, thrive, and actively participate in their communities. With a workforce of over 1,600 employees, the client demonstrates its large-scale commitment to inclusion and impact.

The client provides a range of impactful programs and services, including recreation programs like Camp Accomplish and Access Adventures, community services such as vocational support and therapeutic services, job placement and training programs, and a vehicle donation program that has processed over 200,000 vehicles. The organization also offers technical programs, including IT skills training, furthering its mission to empower individuals for success in today's economy.

Objective

The client set out to achieve four primary goals with this project:

- **Improve Communication Efficiency:** Streamline internal and external communication across six locations.
- **Modernize Infrastructure:** Create a robust and reliable infrastructure capable of supporting modern telecommunication demands.
- **Enhance Scalability:** Provide flexibility to accommodate future growth and technological advancements.
- **Enhance Redundancy:** Ensure redundancy to minimize the risk of service disruptions across the organization.

Key Facts:

Challenge

The client faced a critical challenge in updating its network infrastructure to support the implementation of a new phone system. The existing network, designed for the old phone system, was no longer capable of meeting the organization's telecommunication needs. This required a comprehensive overhaul, including the removal of outdated hardware and the installation of new, advanced network equipment.

The project spanned six locations, requiring careful planning to remove the existing network topology, including its virtual networks and interfaces. Replacement operations had to be scheduled, communicated, and executed as prescribed, ensuring alignment with the organization's operational requirements and timelines.

Solutions

To modernize its network infrastructure, The client replaced outdated Cisco routers with SonicWall firewalls. This upgrade enabled advanced network management capabilities, such as assigning IP addresses based on device type—distinguishing between PCs and phones.

The new system allowed The client to separate and prioritize traffic effectively using Quality of Service (QoS) protocols, optimizing performance for critical voice communication while maintaining reliable data traffic. The project also involved carefully planned removal of the old network topology, including virtual networks and interfaces, ensuring a seamless transition.

The upgraded system was deployed across six locations, creating a scalable, modern, and efficient network infrastructure.

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Approach

The project was executed through a structured and collaborative approach:

- 1. Planning Sessions:** Over six months, the team held 1–2 hour planning sessions to set up test environments, program new network equipment, and determine implementation dates and times.
- 2. Setting Up Test Environments:** Real-world scenarios were simulated to identify potential issues and validate the new equipment.
- 3. Programming New Equipment:** SonicWall firewalls and other infrastructure were preconfigured to meet the specific needs of each location.
- 4. Scheduling and Communication:** Implementation dates and times were effectively scheduled and communicated to staff, ensuring minimal disruption to daily operations.

This methodical approach ensured a seamless transition to the new network infrastructure.

Results

The network infrastructure upgrades and new phone system implementation at The client were successfully completed with minimal disruption to operations. The project delivered immediate and measurable benefits, including:

- **Improved Communication Efficiency:** The new phone system and upgraded network performed as intended, streamlining communication across The client's six locations.
- **Enhanced Network Speed:** Significant improvements in communication speeds were noticed immediately, both between individual sites and between sites and headquarters.
- **Achieved Scalability and Redundancy:** The upgraded infrastructure met its goals of enhancing scalability and redundancy, ensuring a robust and future-proof network capable of supporting The client's evolving needs.