



Wireless Broadband Helps a Bandage-Manufacturing David Compete Like a Goliath



“Business Only Broadband and its Motorola network were far superior to anything I’d ever dealt with in the wireless realm. The solution provides reliable technology that enables survivability.”

— Sean McPartlin, IT Director, Ferris Mfg. Corp.

ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW:

Fast-growing midwestern bandage manufacturer

Ferris Mfg. Corp. is a very successful business located in Burr Ridge, Illinois, outside of Chicago. Ferris manufactures PolyMem® QuadraFoam® advanced wound care dressings for use on chronic wounds, and SportsWrap for use on injuries that include bruises, sprains, and strains. These products are made in the United States and distributed worldwide serving markets as diverse as large medical centers, nursing homes, home health providers, the military and sports organizations, including the Olympics, National Football Association, Major League Baseball and the National Basketball Association.

THE CHALLENGE:

Create an alternative network to ensure world-class performance and customer service

As a relatively small company competing globally with giants, Ferris relies on e-commerce and Internet communications to provide not just 24/7 customer access, but also exceptional customer service. “We have to appear as big as our global competitors,” says Sean McPartlin, IT Director, Ferris Mfg. Corp., “offering services just as good or better.” Because even a single service problem can make Ferris appear less competitive, the company cannot afford to lose connectivity for any reason. Unfortunately, the company often experienced localized outages, as well as inadequate bandwidth from its T1 and T3 leased lines due to spikes in usage. One challenge was to build a redundant network to ensure round-the-clock connectivity for a large number of stakeholders, including a network of offsite employees, distributors and manufacturers representatives who need access to Ferris’ applications and services.

Another issue was the Internet signal was routed through a large number of network hops, customers—especially overseas—were experiencing serious delays as they interacted with the Ferris website. To avoid unfavorable comparison with larger competitors, Ferris needed a more direct route to the Internet to enable faster, more positive customer experiences.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Enterprise

Ferris Mfg. Corp.

Industry

Manufacturing

Motorola solution

- Motorola Point-to-Multipoint wireless network

Solution features

- Reliable network continuity
- Automatic fail over to backup network
- More direct route to Internet
- MPLS network overlay
- BGP routing

Benefits

- High 24/7 reliability
- Improved customer service and satisfaction
- Simplified deployment and scalability
- Flexible contracts and service level agreements
- Significant cost savings

THE SOLUTION:
Connectivity with Business Only Broadband and its Motorola Point-to-Multipoint high-speed wireless network

Ferris partnered with Business Only Broadband (BOB), a Chicago-based solutions provider, to utilize a highly reliable “co-primary network” that both serves as a fail over backup solution and provides streamlined Internet access for its customers. “Gone are the days of a ‘break glass in case of emergency’ solution for backup,” says Shane Hampton, vice president market development, Business Only Broadband. “Co-primary networks are the new best practice.” BOB provides Ferris with high-speed connectivity to its powerful Motorola Point-to-Multipoint wireless broadband network that has 31 Access Points (APs) throughout the Chicago area, reducing the number of hops by ensuring that no customer is more than three miles from an AP. The company uses Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) routing to bond the two networks together, enabling each co-primary system to provide both customer service and automatic backup if a disruption occurs on either network.

BOB also provided Ferris with a Class “C” Internet address that ensures the most expedient route to the Internet, assuring excellent Quality of Service for national and international customers. In addition, BOB also created a Multi Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) overlay to the network that ensures priority service for Ferris, and prioritizes higher speeds for voice communications that demand low latency, allocating slower speeds to less performance-intensive data applications. “From our standpoint,” says McPartlin, “the point of MLPS is the ability to give priority to one packet over another.”

THE RESULTS:
Better customer service with increased bandwidth

Ferris is excited by the new system for a number of reasons. Not only is its business continuity assured, but its customer service is improved. “We now have the crucial ability to serve more customers at any given time without slowdowns,” explains McPartlin. Customers have noticed the differences, too; they now enjoy continuous connectivity and throughputs of 4-5 Mbps that significantly improve customer experiences and service.

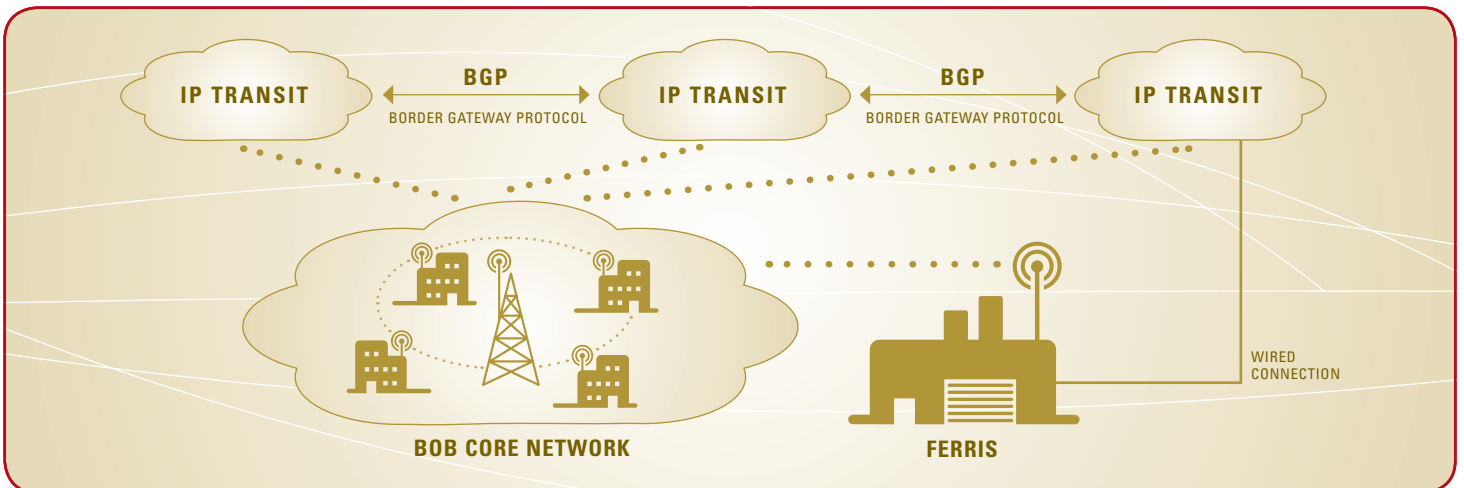
Finally, the new system offers significant advantages in deployment flexibility and cost savings. In previous times, when Ferris needed additional bandwidth, renegotiations for new wireline service and new Service Level Agreements (SLAs) were both time- and resource-draining. With wireless, additional bandwidth can typically be provided in 24 hours or less. In addition, because there are no recurring monthly leased line costs, more bandwidth is typically more affordable. Delivery time issues are also crucial. The reality is that due to many issues—including proximity to nearest fiber point, the need to secure permits and the availability of phone company engineers and other personnel—it could take from six to 18 months to deploy new fiber service. In contrast, wireless service can be up and running in a matter of hours or days.

For Ferris, the positive user experiences generated by its access to BOB’s Motorola Point-to-Multipoint wireless network translate to greater user adoption and satisfaction, which leads to stronger customer relationships and helps level the playing field against the company’s larger competitors.

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- Sean McPartlin, IT Director, Ferris Mfg. Corp.

VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORK DESIGN



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