

Reprinted with the permission of Telecommunications

Telecommunications

©2008 Horizon House® Publications, Inc.

HOK Sport Venue Event gets IP infusion Adopts XO's MPLS IP-VPN solution

by Sean Buckley

Mon. July 21, 2008

Fans attending an American football game at Gillette Stadium (home of the New England Patriots) or a good soccer match in the UK's Wembley Stadium are probably unaware that HOK Sport Venue Event, an architectural design firm, has left its mark on each.

When conducting the business of architectural design, HOK faces the challenge of transferring large computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing (CAD CAM) files across their various locations. HOK also wants a foundation to support VoIP when ready. After weighing the options of five major telecom players for an IP/MPLS VPN solution, it settled on XO Communications. Telecommunications' Editor in Chief Sean Buckley talked with Bobby Johnson, IT network manager at HOK, about how the company is leveraging XO's MPLS-based IP VPN service to improve communications between its five remote offices.

Telecommunications: HOK is an architectural firm with five locations designing stadiums, so what did you need from a network provider to build out an MPLS-based network?

Johnson: We have some large files from drawings we do for CAD. We have to be able to transfer those files to other locations and also internally.

We made a decision to get better capabilities in-house and also from our remote offices: to do more collaboration in software and applications. First we had to take a look at what vendors provided the best capability to transfer these files.

Telecommunications: With all the choices out there for telecom services, how did you settle on XO?

Johnson: We were not an XO customer. We looked at multiple ISP vendors and [found] out which one had the best solution. We looked at five vendors, including XO, and found it had the best functionality and tools we needed.

Telecommunications: When you are looking for a service provider, how important is responsive customer service?

Johnson: Yes, that was also taken into consideration. What kind of portal did they have for us to get in and view our Web page; what kind of tools did they have for the team to use troubleshooting; what kind of monitoring system did they have; and how good was the customer service when you called them—and response time?

Telecommunications: VoIP is one of the applications that can be supported with the new MPLS network. Are you deploying VoIP now, and what is its value?

Johnson: We built this road to go to VoIP, but we don't have it fully functional yet. We have to build the road, so when we do go to VoIP we'll be ready.

Telecommunications: Overall, what is the value of having an IP/MPLS VPN network?



"We looked at multiple ISP vendors and [found] out which one had the best solution. found it had the best functionality and tools we needed."

Bobby Johnson, IT Network Manager,
HOK Sport Venue Event

Johnson: Prior to this, we had a small connection between our offices. There was a huge bottleneck transferring files, and sometimes you wouldn't even transfer a file to the other offices. With the addition of XO, we now can collaborate more with our files and also use videoconferencing to communicate with our other offices. Having this connection has improved our productivity with those offices.

Telecommunications: How did the transition go? Where there any issues?

Johnson: With any kind of major network improvement you're going to have some delays. We had some delay in deploying it, but overall we're very satisfied with getting everything implemented and going live. It takes time and we worked out those issues and got them resolved. There's no switch you can hit and everything works perfectly.

Telecommunications: What is the underlying pipe you're using at each of your sites?

Johnson: We went with a DS-3 and have the capability to increase that DS-3. All of our remote offices are running with a 3Mbps pipe, which is great, and we have the capability to extend that if necessary.

Telecommunications: Have you looked at Ethernet options as well?

Johnson: We are using Ethernet between the remote offices.

Telecommunications: What advice would you offer another enterprise in choosing a new provider and making a network transition?

Johnson: No matter who you go with you have to do due diligence and look at every aspect and pick a company that fits your environment. We looked at all the different vendors and talked to their customers. I would say you have to do the work and make sure this vendor is the best fit for your company.

Reprinted with the permission of Telecommunications

Telecommunications

©2008 Horizon House® Publications, Inc.

About XO Communications

XO Communications, a subsidiary of XO Holdings, Inc., is a leading nationwide provider of advanced communications services and solutions for businesses, enterprises, government, carriers and service providers. Its customers include more than half of the Fortune 500, in addition to leading cable companies, carriers, content providers and mobile network operators. Utilizing its unique combination of high-capacity nationwide and metro networks and broadband wireless capabilities, XO offers customers a broad range of managed voice, data and IP services with proven performance, scalability and value in more than 75 metropolitan markets across the United States. For more information, visit www.xo.com.

XO Communications offers MPLS IP-VPN—a network-based, fully-managed Wide Area Networking solution that makes it easier to stay on top of your network budget and the technology curve. With XO® MPLS IP-VPN, customers get the cost savings of consolidating voice, data and video networks onto a single IP-based platform, with all the advantages of the latest Multi Protocol Label Switching technology.

Benefits include speedier deployment of critical business applications, lower network operating costs, scalable band-width options, and universal site-to-network connectivity. XO helps design, install and manage the IP-VPN, and customize it to meet specific Class of Service and bandwidth requirements.



For more information,
contact your local
XO Sales Representative
or visit www.xo.com.