

HOP enables M&A strategy and cuts IT support costs by 60%

What good is business growth if your network can't keep up?

That was the challenge facing HOP Energy LLC. The White Plains, N.Y.-based company supplies heating oil to six states in the Northeastern U.S., and it had grown over the last 16 years by acquiring nearly 50 companies. But Hop Energy's network, provided by a major communications carrier, couldn't keep pace.

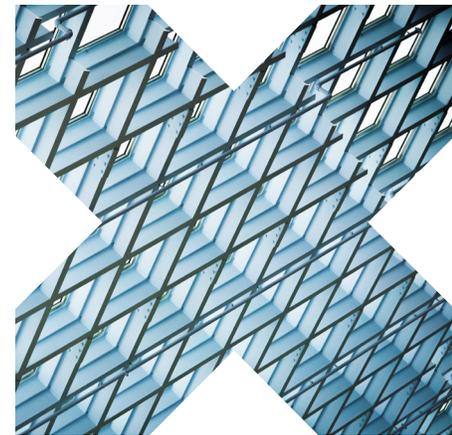
Network downtime was excessive, spurring nearly 20 employee help desk calls a day. Application performance was insufficient; for example, if a circuit at one HOP Energy location had a problem, it would impact all critical business applications. Tech support was a "nightmare," according to director of network operations Kristopher Masilamani. The IT department had to wade through the numerous 1-800 support numbers to find the right person who could look at its account. That wasn't good for Masilamani and his team. "I don't want end users calling to say their applications are down," he says, "because it's my job to know that before they call me."

So HOP Energy's technical team opted to change network providers. Out went the major carrier's rigid network and in came Masergy with its fully-managed fully-managed SD-WAN-enabled hybrid networking solution. The timing of the new implementation – conducted during one of HOP Energy's busiest seasons – made things tricky.

Masergy developed a seamless migration plan that made it possible for HOP Energy to easily switch over to the new network even during its busiest times, without interruption to users. "We basically moved a wire from one switch to a Masergy-managed switch. And that was that," Masilamani says. Masergy handled all of the other design and configuration details, he notes.

"We're able to segregate traffic by applications and see where the bottlenecks are. That's innovative and something we never had before."

Kristopher Masilamani
Director of Network Operations, HOP Energy



Support desk cost savings:

60%

Dialing up the benefits

By switching to Masergy's network service, Masilamani says, HOP Energy gained visibility, a customized design, and significant cost savings. Visibility is delivered by Masergy's web-based portal. This shows the network-operations team where bottlenecks are forming before they become serious problems.

Even if his team does miss an issue, Masergy's proactive notification service can back them up. Masergy's Network Operations Center personnel calls and emails Masilamani when a possible problem is brewing, then follows up later to make sure the issue was resolved.

Masergy's intelligent analytics and service control also lets Masilamani view traffic by class of service or protocols, a feature he calls a "huge plus".

Solution highlights

- Masergy's fully-managed hybrid network service, including Web-based administrative portal
- Custom design with full redundancy, backup components and no single point of failure
- Support from Masergy's team of network experts who monitor the network, send phone and email alerts when possible issues arise, then follow up to ensure each issue was resolved

Recognized results

- Dramatically improved visibility into the network, including the ability to detect traffic bottlenecks early—before they become problems
- Greater data protection, ability to meet seasonal high demand, and potential for future expansion
- Far fewer end-user calls, resulting in support-desk costs

Customization

Masergy offers custom design, and that turned out to be important for HOP Energy's failover plan at the data center. Previously, if a component failed, it could take down the entire network. But now, if a component fails, a backup is ready. In fact, it's built into HOP Energy's design for a redundant network with no single point of failure. That protects the company's data, bolsters its ability to meet heightened customer demand during the busy winter season, accommodates future business expansions and provides high levels of network visibility and control.

Cost savings have been substantial, too. Masilamani estimates that the Masergy network service has allowed HOP Energy to reduce its support-desk costs by 60 percent, due to the huge drop in employee calls. With the old network, he says, the help desk would receive about 15 to 18 calls a day. The drop in call volume, in turn, has allowed HOP Network to renegotiate its support-desk contract at a much lower price.

"I'd recommend Masergy to any company. Based on the changes we've experienced in our network, and the benefits it has provided, it's a win."

Kristopher Masilamani, Director of Network Operations, HOP Energy