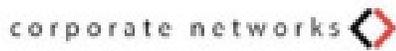


Partnering to provide next-generation communications and collaboration



Overview

The Business Challenge

With limited access to scarce technical staff, Corporate Networks – a technology solutions provider and consultancy firm – wanted to move their data centre offsite without disrupting customers; reduce the management burden on strained technical resources; and improve their ability to offer new services. To do this, they needed to partner with a leading systems and network provider.

The Solution

Corporate Networks can now deliver Allstream HCS (Hosted Collaboration Solution) to its corporate customers on Allstream's MPLS network. HCS, a suite of next-generation IP network-enabled communications and collaboration applications, lets Corporate Networks offer enterprise-grade capabilities as well as the simplicity, efficiency and cost savings of cloud hosting.

The Benefit

Corporate Networks has realized a range of benefits related to the company's HCS capability that they pass on to their clients, including reduced need for on-premise technical expertise, no need to invest in hardware upgrades, a 30% reduction in lines after porting to MPLS, long-term scalability, business continuity and the ability to reallocate staff time to other services.

Corporate Networks and Allstream make a perfect pair

Corporate Networks, a full-complement technology solutions provider and consultancy firm, had been providing hosted enterprise solutions to the Fort McMurray area of Alberta for more than 15 years. In a difficult operating environment where skilled technical staff was both scarce and hard to attract, the company wanted to move their data centre offsite without disrupting customers; reduce the management burden on strained technical resources; and improve their ability to offer new, innovative services.

"We'd been using an internal data centre to host our clients' services, and it was a massive undertaking," says Corporate Networks CEO Ahsen Butt. "We had already decided to move our solutions to the cloud via a SunGard data centre so we wouldn't have to worry about the facility, upkeep and uptime, but we were also looking for a partner to provide the systems we would use to deliver our services to our clients." That's where Allstream came in. "We were actually similar to Allstream and had been providing hosted solutions for years, but once we saw what they were doing with their HCS solution delivered on their MPLS network – and the price point they could do it at – it just made sense to partner with them."

Corporate Networks has built its approach and its reputation on forging successful partnerships – both with their clients and with the IT and telecom peers they work with. They had been hosting Cisco solutions for years and had successfully partnered with SunGard on cloud solutions. Now Allstream was setting up as the ideal company to work with on communications and collaboration systems. "We build our business not only on how much value we add to our clients, but also on the value we add to our partners. Our goal is to mutually benefit everyone involved. Allstream, in particular, offers evidence of how successfully this model can work."





With their current infrastructure and capabilities, Corporate Networks can offer managed, hosted services to businesses throughout Fort McMurray, with Allstream also available as a valued partner to assist with the voice aspect of the technology.

“For a long time, no one else was really doing what we were doing, so when Cisco brought Allstream’s HCS solution to the table, it immediately made sense to us. They’d embarked on what we were already doing, so we knew that if we could do it as a small organization, Allstream was in an even better position to carry this type of hosting service forward.”

Ahsen Butt,
CEO,
Corporate Networks

HCS on MPLS delivers on Corporate Networks’ customer commitments

Corporate Networks can now deliver Allstream HCS (Hosted Collaboration Solution) to its corporate customers on Allstream’s MPLS network. HCS, a suite of next-generation IP network-enabled communications and collaboration applications, lets Corporate Networks offer customers enterprise-grade capabilities as well as the simplicity, efficiency and cost savings of cloud hosting. And their existing customers haven’t even noticed the switchover.

“As far as our customers are concerned,” states Butt, “there was no change in our solution or vendor. All they knew is we upgraded our client and services to our new data centre.” The local Catholic School Board is one of Corporate Networks’ most significant clients, and they now have over 600 users successfully using the Allstream/Corporate Networks/Cisco solution. “It’s been a total solution for them,” Butt enthuses. “They’ve been able to offload and simplify management of IP and phones, and they have a per-user, per-month cost that’s a lot easier to understand and control.”

“It’s been great all around,” says Butt. “There was a lot of pre- and post-planning, and it was a huge install – I think Allstream would concur that’s it’s been one of their biggest in Western Canada – our last site switched over December 2013, and things have been running smoothly since.”

Project brings enough benefits to go around

While the project is too recent to have produced many hard metrics, Corporate Networks and their customers have already seen several benefits. For one thing, the company no longer has an immediate need to find and retain a lot of on-premise technical expertise. They did not have to invest in hardware upgrades, and combined with porting approximately 80 telco lines over to MPLS (a 30% reduction in lines), they’ve achieved significant cost savings that they passed down to customers.



With Allstream's HCS offering in place, Corporate Networks is expanding its market presence and taking on larger enterprise clients – showing that the size of a company does not determine the size of its service capabilities.

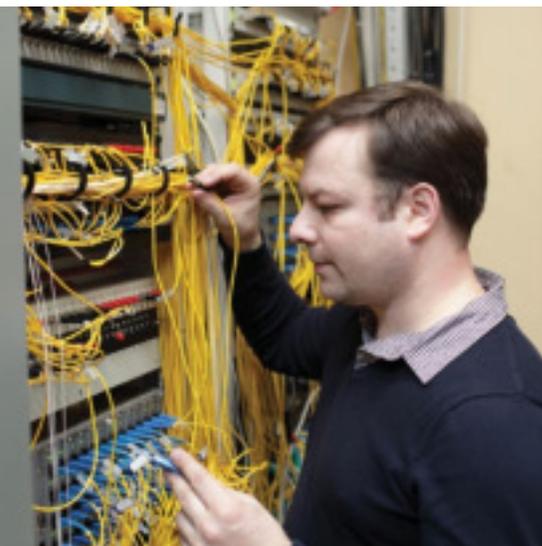
“Allstream has been absolutely great at every level, right from day one – and their after-sales support is amazing. I know there are key people at the executive level making sure this project succeeds. From the relationship side, business, implementation, technical – it’s been a great experience for me. I’m sure it’s a partnership that will flourish.”

Ahsen Butt,
CEO,
Corporate Networks

“It truly has been a winning situation for everyone involved,” states Butt, putting the initiative in perspective. “I don’t have to have my senior technical staff focused on the data centre, so reallocating their time to other services was an immediate, direct saving. I also don’t have to worry about our facility going down in case of an issue. And in the end, we have a highly scalable platform we can build on to deliver new and exciting services to other clients.”

Planning for growth and innovation

Going forward, Corporate Networks’ potential to deliver new offerings built on the HCS MPLS platform is huge. Services such as cloud-based recording, cloud-based call accounting, geo-redundancy, and an enterprise-calibre contact centre solution are all options the company expects to roll out at a later date. “We’re looking at offering HCS as a combined solution where we build on what we’ve already accomplished,” anticipates Butt. “Our goal, heavily dependent on Allstream, is that any and every client that can benefit from the solution – from SMB to over 1,500 users – will be on it. In my opinion, when you review the savings on telco lines and other infrastructure and the reduced staff requirements, it’s more economical to go this way. It just makes sense.”



About Corporate Networks

Based in Fort McMurray, Alberta, Corporate Networks provides end-to-end IT solutions to K-12 and the enterprise sector, including a full range of technology and consulting services. For the past 29 years, it has concentrated on delivering quality work and customer service.

Corporate Networks strives to build partnerships, not just vendor / client relationships, with its customers – and its vendors. They include IT providers such as Allstream, Cisco, Citrix and Microsoft, among others.

Today, Corporate Networks focuses on making sure that businesses and individuals communicate more effectively through strong technology infrastructure. To do this, it invests a lot of effort in R&D to stay on the leading edge. Specifically, it emphasizes advanced communication and collaboration systems.

Corporate Networks launched its new Surric product, our turn key enterprise solution for a core technology infrastructure. Surric was designed and created by Corporate Networks to provide enterprise services without the client having to invest in the capital for the core infrastructure. Coupled with the HCS, voice-over IP (VoIP) telephone system offering SMB to enterprise client a one stop solution.



Allstream

Allstream is the only national communications provider working exclusively with business customers. Our focus is helping you simplify IT operations to improve productivity, maximize performance and manage costs. Our IP solutions are delivered on a fully managed, fully secure national network and backed by our industry-leading commitment to customer service: The Allstream Service Guarantee.

Driven by the expertise of our 2,500 employees across Canada, we operate a 30,000 km fibre-optic network combining advanced IP connectivity, digital switching, Ethernet-featured services, and the latest security technologies. Our portfolio includes the highest-capacity voice, data and Internet connections, unified communications, and managed services, all flexibly designed for the needs of large, mid-market and small businesses.

We can help you compete more profitably by converging voice and data over a single, reliable, end-to-end infrastructure that delivers exceptional quality of service between metropolitan centres.

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