

RSEA has Future Growth of Data Services covered with Nextgen VPLS



With a rapidly expanding business, RSEA solved its bandwidth issues, regained control of its data communications and laid the foundation for IT to support future business growth by implementing a VPLS data services solution from Nextgen Networks.

“Our data is now centralised and we have complete control of it which is going to save us significant amounts of money into the future. That will be borne out even further as the business continues to grow.

“As new sites come onto the network, it will be costing us a lot less money to implement the data links and connect to the data services that are needed to run our core business processes.”

Luciano Gallina,
IT Support Administrator, RSEA

RSEA Customer Profile:

Industry: Retail and Hire

Size: 12 locations – 200-plus staff

Snapshot: RSEA is retailer and hirer of work and road safety equipment with operations throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Objective:

To centralise the management and configuration of the national data network including Internet connections, thereby reducing complexity of supporting core business applications and ease the process of bringing new sites online as the business continues to grow.

Approach:

Take advantage of the multi-access options available through Nextgen Networks' VPLS solution to set up a high speed, highly secure, national data network that can be managed entirely from a centralised location.

IT Benefits:

- Centralised management of national data network and Internet
- Regained control of how Internet connections are used
- Ability to self-manage bandwidth and Quality of Service for individual applications
- Easy connection of new sites
- Use of multi access technologies for connections to national data network
- Significant bandwidth availability

Business Benefits:

- Reduced costs of national data carriage
- Ability to support rapid introduction of data links and services to new sites
- Improved performance and availability of critical business applications at POS
- Operational efficiencies reducing cost of IT support

About RSEA:

RSEA is a retail and hire business that specialises in an extremely diverse range of safety products including work wear, signs, road safety equipment, personal protection equipment and much more. It employs over 200 staff and currently has 12 super-stores and hire depots in Australia and New Zealand with plans to open at least three more in 2008.

Formed in 2001, RSEA also has a large contract hire business in each state of Australia that caters to public and private markets for construction, road safety, traffic management and crowd control equipment.

Data services at the core of business

RSEA's IT department is centrally located at the Moorabbin, Victoria head office and runs a suite of enterprise applications that are critical to the success of the business including stock, warehousing and logistics, POS, financials, customer relationship management and sales.

According to Mr Luciano Gallina, RSEA's IT Support Administrator, the availability and flexibility of its data network is crucial to the way RSEA conducts business and to future growth.

Mission: To improve the data services

As part of a broader operational review, Mr Gallina said that RSEA was looking at ways to reduce costs, increase bandwidth and improve the quality of services being provided to its remote locations.

"The speed at which we are able to transfer data across the country and over to New Zealand is extremely important to us," Mr Gallina said. "Our incumbent supplier was somewhat inflexible and tended to tell us how it is going to be rather than asking what we needed."

"We have aggressive expansion plans for the business which includes opening five more stores in 2008, so it is important for us to support that greater business objective. It is imperative that we can easily scale up bandwidth and quality of service in alignment with that operational growth."

"We need to be able to quickly add on new sites and then have the ability to easily manage them once they are up and running."



"Just about every aspect of our business processes are managed by information and communications technology," Mr Gallina said. "All of our core business systems are administered from a centralised location with thin data applications being delivered to various locations around the country over public data networks."

"Up until recently, we had been using a variety of different access technologies with each store around the country having its own individual managed switch, data connection and Internet services provider. It was chaotic from a management point of view so we just wanted to bring it all together under a single banner."

"We were completely disappointed with the legacy service at Moorabbin and went looking for alternatives. We are not particularly huge data users but it would be fair to say that data communications are at the core of the way we do business and in the past it had been hard to find a carrier who would accept responsibility for maintaining a certain level of service."

Nextgen VPLS

Implemented: VPLS from Nextgen Networks

RSEA looked at a range of options to improve the quality and management of its data network connections.

“We weighed up the offerings from all of the main providers and quickly concluded that Nextgen had the best solution for our specific needs,” Mr Gallina said. “Nextgen’s solution packages all of the services and products into a single solution.”

“We now use Nextgen and its VPLS solution for all of our Internet connections and our data carriage needs.”

RSEA did not need to buy any new hardware to implement Nextgen’s VPLS solution as it was all supplied and installed by the carrier. Access speeds and Quality of Service (QoS) preferences are now all configured and managed by the central IT team at Moorabbin. Moorabbin uses a 2Mb/s connection while the remote stores have between 500Kb/s and 1Mb/s of bandwidth and they can be increased if necessary.

“All of our core systems and applications are hosted centrally at Moorabbin and accessed by thin clients over the Internet,” Mr Gallina said. “All 12 sites are connected directly to this infrastructure via the Nextgen national fibre network using the VPLS service.”

“We have total control of everything relating to data coming in and out of each of the 12 stores including email and the Internet. A staff member at any of the stores can now have immediate, stable high speed access to all sales, accounts and stocking information required to service our customers.”

Saving time and money with VPLS

Mr Gallina said there will be significant cost savings in data services. This reduction in data carriage charges is just one of the cost and efficiency benefits RSEA will reap from its Nextgen Networks VPLS solution.

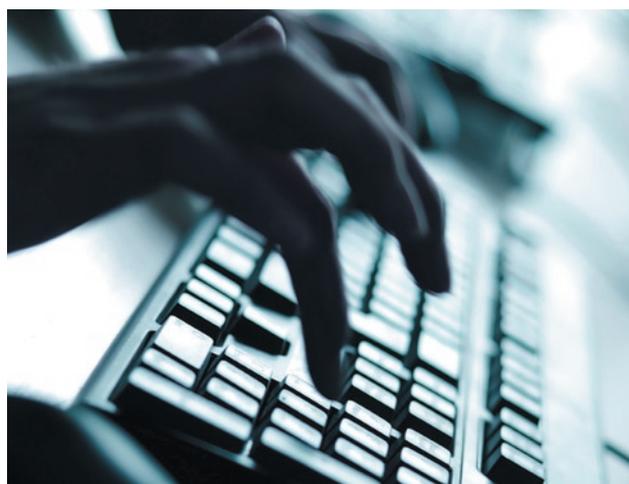
“Combining all of the disparate Internet services and data carriage into a single contract with Nextgen will obviously save us a lot of money,” Mr Gallina said. “We have higher bandwidth at less cost and with the help of VPLS’s self-management features, there will be no more add-on fees for changes and additions.”

“There will also be efficiency gains through only having one easy-to-understand bill to deal with and a single point of contact for managing data services issues. From a management and operational efficiency point of view, this is definitely going to be saving us money into the future and that will be borne out even further as we add new stores to the network.”

Risk mitigation through self-management

Having the ability to centrally self-manage Internet connections and data switches at all of its remote locations is helping to make IT operations much more secure and stable for RSEA, according to Mr Gallina.

“The Nextgen VPLS solution is a far more secure option for us and it is also significantly reducing the risk of application downtime,” Mr Gallina said. “As a point-of-sale retail business, every second that we are down we are losing money and every second of application delay because we don’t have enough bandwidth, we are losing money. So there is significant risk mitigation from being able to pro actively self-manage our data services.”



“Previously, each store had its own Internet connection and managed switch. They were all going straight out to the Internet to get to our centralised thin client core business applications. Clearly that represented a security risk and under those circumstances, we had no control over how the Internet connections were being used.”

“Now we have complete control of access as well as how much bandwidth is available and we can guarantee quality of service for individual applications.”

Supporting business growth

With the implementation of Nextgen's VPLS solution, RSEA's IT operations team has positioned itself to support the expansion objectives of the business.

"Now as we add new stores, it is all about being able to bring them into the network easily," Mr Gallina said. "We no longer have to configure anything. With secure direct connections to our Moorabbin head office, they just have to plug the modem in and it is all connected and managed centrally."

"When we decided to implement the VPLS solution, we were taking a long-term view. It just made it a lot easier and gave us a lot more flexibility in how we managed and expanded our data service."

Bandwidth to burn

By utilising Nextgen's vast fibre network, bandwidth is no longer an issue for RSEA. When stores get really busy and up to 10 staff are accessing the Internet or core business applications at the same time, there is no reduction in the quality of service for any individual user.

"We have the ability to remotely manage bandwidth availability at individual stores and expand it when there is a need to do so without having to rely on the carrier," Mr Gallina said. "It is a far more efficient way to operate."

"Meanwhile, we also now have enough bandwidth to be able to set up full redundancy for our systems and applications somewhere else which will also support better disaster recovery and mitigate against the risk of downtime."

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ABOUT NEXTGEN NETWORKS:

Nextgen Networks is a specialist provider of high performance data services and solutions. A member of the Leighton Group, Nextgen Networks owns and operates Australia's third largest fibre optic network and Australia's first national VPLS network. Its customers include managed network service providers, network integrators, carriers, corporations and government agencies.

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