

CASE STUDY

Risk Metrics

The Customer

Risk Metrics, based in Boca Raton, FL, is the nation's leading database supplier of Workers Compensation prospect information, uniquely supplying X-dates and carrier of record details on more than 3.4 million employer records in 32 states. Its clients are commercial insurance companies, providing them with information about potential customers' buying habits. Because of information provided from Risk Metrics, producers know when to time their marketing/sales activities to increase the number and volume of their sales.

The Challenge

"My Internet connection never worked. I never made it through a single day without an interruption. My lifeblood is data communications, but my old provider nearly drove me out of business."

John McCarthy, Risk Metrics' chief executive officer, was clearly frustrated. His company was dependent on consistent, reliable voice and data services, yet he wasn't getting what he was paying for. Even worse, the customer (McCarthy) consistently got the runaround when he called his old provider's technical support for help.

"I had a horrendous experience. I'd call the data folks, and they'd tell me, 'it's the quality of the line.' The line folks would say, 'it's the DSL that's not working.' They couldn't see each other's problems. But I could. Our entire service would go out daily...and if it rained, they had trouble with landlines getting wet, which produced static. Which meant I couldn't transmit the data I needed to make available to my customers. Everyone pointed to everyone else. I didn't know what to do."

The service issues affected his ability to do business. Large file transfers were routinely interrupted by static on the line; online video presentations were knocked offline.

"I would spend countless hours on the phone with technical support but nothing was ever corrected to fix the problem," he said.

Not only was Risk Metrics not getting the service McCarthy had paid for, nobody from the phone company ever called to check in or follow up on the level or quality of service he was (or wasn't) receiving.

It was about this time that Mark Ralston at World Telecom Advisors, a Windstream dealer, contacted McCarthy, asking if he could offer a more dependable communications solution. "I told him I was more interested in building a relationship," Ralston said. "He told me he didn't want to be burned by another company."

The Solution: Windstream Business

Ralston quickly determined that McCarthy required faster, more reliable Internet availability over a dedicated T-1 line, delivering far greater throughput than he had with his old firm or the DSL line it had been providing. Risk Metrics was seeking a business-grade solution that would support its mission-critical applications. Beyond that, however, McCarthy also required a solution that was broader-based than mere VoIP; his company had several fax lines requiring traditional analog

service. Most advanced telecom companies weren't going to be able to deliver a mix of products and services to meet each of his needs.

But Windstream could deliver...and did. Ralston recommended Windstream's VoIP and Data service, telling him that VoIP could help make his entire broadband solution better and more efficient through the use of dynamic bandwidth allocation for voice and data services. While conventional telecommunications require separate channels for voice and data traffic, Windstream VoIP and Data allows voice, Internet, and WAN services to coexist. This allowed McCarthy's team to optimize Risk Metrics' bandwidth use based on traffic prioritization.

The robust network platform Windstream has deployed for Risk Metrics supports a wide variety of services that include voice lines, PRIs, SIP, and high bandwidth applications of up to 100 Mbps. Even better, Risk Metrics ended up getting more, yet paying less than it had with its previous phone company. Windstream was able to provide a complete solution for the company's local lines, Internet T-1 service, toll free, long distance and single copper lines under one billing platform.

"With Windstream, we were able to improve Risk Metric's quality of Internet service," says Ralston. "VoIP delivered faster upload speeds, so that Risk Metrics could reliably upload their files by FTP in a fraction of the time it previously took."

The company also has a dedicated Customer Service team to resolve any issues that may arise.

"The only thing I can't comment on is customer service after the sale, and that's because everything is working, 24/7," says McCarthy. "I haven't even had a reason to call in the last eight months, since I went with Windstream."

The Future

"In my business, you've heard it's all about the Cloud," says McCarthy, "and I think that's where we're headed. We want to be able to take advantage of the cost savings and reliability. In the Cloud, your data is kept elsewhere; it's stored, and we buy additional storage capacity as we need it. Right now, we have voice communications back and forth with our customers, and we ship data to them via FTP. In the future, they'll go online to us, and buy everything via the website, but that website will probably be hosted in the Cloud.

"We're in the midst of moving toward a hosted solution. We want to be ahead of our customers in making our data accessible via the Cloud and providing them a solution, based on Data as a Service. It's the future in terms of data and software," McCarthy says. "In order to meet our vision, I'm going to need a trusted provider, who's capable of delivering the complete infrastructure I need to succeed. And that provider is Windstream."