

Metrie delivers a prime user experience with Citrix SD-WAN

Now employees can enjoy a consistent IT experience

Delivering a great employee experience

Metrie, the largest supplier and manufacturer of solid wood and composite moulding in North America, needed to deliver a great employee experience across all of its locations. That meant having SaaS and virtual applications available and performing in a consistent and familiar way - every time and for every user.

A number of technical challenges impacting the business led Metrie to evaluate SD-WAN. Network issues meant that people couldn't get their work done and IT had an issue on its hands. Metrie IT Operations wanted a solution that would provide redundancy should the primary MPLS connection become compromised. The company's IT team wanted a solution that could mitigate the situation by providing:

- "Application assurance" in the form of a reliable network that included an active second connection with seamless failover to the Internet
- An option to reduce latency due to backhauling Office 365 traffic, which was causing the user experience to suffer
- A network solution that could connect to their Azure Virtual Network (VNet) and help move the remainder of their apps there

The user experience was a prime consideration. With a network using MPLS and an IP VPN, users experienced inconsistent SAP and virtual application performance. Additionally, the automated failover with VPN backend was slow. This resulted in interruptions in virtual sessions.

Backhauling the Office 365 traffic through the data center and firewalls caused poor latency, negatively impacting the Office 365 experience. This also went against Microsoft's guidance for best practices.



Industry

Manufacturing

Location

USA

Citrix products

- Citrix SD-WAN
- Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops

Key Benefits

- Consistent high-performance experience for users in all locations
- With direct breakout from the branches to Office 365, employees enjoy reduced latency and better call quality
- Ability to quickly test and deploy new applications as well as upgrading, patching and maintaining existing ones

Citrix SD-WAN is the right solution for Metrie

Through exhaustive due diligence, Metrie chose Citrix SD-WAN with a key consideration that the solution could support the organization's Citrix Virtual Apps deployment. Citrix is the only vendor to offer native support for Citrix multi-stream ICA protocol as part of HDX out of the box. This means that Citrix traffic can now be prioritized ahead of file transfers. Metrie also could prioritize the streams of Citrix ICA traffic on a single port.

With Citrix SD-WAN, Metrie has true WAN link aggregation for combined internet bandwidth. The two bonded links provide sub-second failover should the MPLS go down. Because Metrie wanted to keep its MPLS for application and voice QoS, having internet circuits alone was not a requirement.

Another benefit of using Citrix SD-WAN with Citrix Virtual Apps is the visibility provided via logging and reporting tools. Citrix SD-WAN enables Metrie to monitor HDX session quality by computing a Quality-of-Experience (QoE) metric based on network conditions.

Metrie completed PoCs with a short list of vendors. The PoC process with Citrix was a collaborative one with a Citrix SME serving as a dedicated resource to ensure the PoC was carried out efficiently with Metrie.

Citrix Virtual Apps and the ongoing path to cloud

In the past, users experienced dissatisfaction with SAP, Concur, as well as with Office 365. Citrix Virtual Apps aids Metrie in deploying these applications to any users' devices wherever they are located. Metrie uses Citrix Virtual Apps to deliver critical applications such as SAP to office locations from a hosted data center.

Regardless of employee location, Citrix Virtual Apps gives IT the flexibility to centrally manage, secure, and deploy their business-critical applications.

Currently, the company is halfway through a multi-year plan to migrate the majority of its infrastructure to the cloud. Their Citrix Virtual Apps environment is currently hosted in Microsoft Azure.

Citrix SD-WAN provided Metrie with direct breakout to Office 365 and is qualified in Microsoft's Office 365 networking partner program. Citrix SD-WAN leverages APIs containing published Office 365 endpoint URLs and IP addresses to learn the closest Office 365 front door locations to the users.

With Citrix SD-WAN, Metrie can also take advantage of the default Quad9 DNS service rather than backhauling their Office 365 DNS requests to reduce the distance that traffic has to travel.

However, even though Metrie uses Microsoft Azure, sending Microsoft Teams traffic directly to the nearest Azure region would mean hair-pinning, which would add latency. Citrix SD-WAN solves this problem because it can segregate the Teams traffic and send it directly to one of Microsoft's 160 Office 365 front doors, closest to users.

“Citrix SD-WAN helped us to optimize connectivity to Office 365 and critical business applications resulting in a much-improved end user experience. In technical terms we’ve seen a 57% reduction in latency in branches for Office 365 , lowered packet loss by 93%, and a 21% reduction in jitter.”

Will Crichton
Director, IT Operations
Metrie

The result

Using Citrix Virtual Apps with SD-WAN further optimizes these deployments for Metrie and offers their users a seamless application experience. Now, with direct breakout from the branches to Office 365, employees enjoy reduced latency and better call quality overall.

According to Will Crichton, “Using Citrix Virtual Apps in Azure in combination with Application Layering and MCS (Machine Creation Services) allows us to quickly test and deploy new applications as well as upgrading, patching and maintaining existing ones.”

With Citrix SD-WAN supporting their Citrix Virtual Apps in the cloud and SaaS apps like Office 365, they get a consistent high-performance experience for users in all locations.

The future is now clear. Citrix allows Metrie to deliver a consistent application experience no matter where the applications live. The integration Citrix SD-WAN provides with Citrix Virtual Apps and Microsoft cloud means that Citrix will be a key partner for Metrie well into the future.

“Using Citrix Virtual Apps in Azure in combination with Application Layering and MCS (Machine Creation Services) allows us to quickly test and deploy new applications as well as upgrading, patching and maintaining existing ones.”

Will Crichton
Director, IT Operations
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