

Koch Trucking

Expanding business and optimizing IT infrastructure with SD-WAN



Koch Trucking

kochtrucking.us

- Family-owned business based in Minnesota
- Provides long-haul and regional trucking services nationwide
- 1,500+ employees
- 900 trucks, 2,000 trailers
- 20+ sites around the United States

Challenges

- Needed to manage network performance and security from HQ to multiple sites
- Lacked consolidated network resources
- Wanted to decrease need for local support at each site
- Required redundancy for high reliability and security

Solutions

- Managed SD-WAN provides control, performance and reliability
- MPLS and broadband transport for greater efficiency and security
- VoIP phone system across sites

Results

- Upgraded phone systems at little to no added cost
- Scalable platform that can grow with the business
- Increased productivity
- Ability to manage expansion to international markets

“The network is absolutely key to the business. We wanted a little bit more control of the network and all the devices from headquarters. With SD-WAN, I can manage it from Minnesota.”

— Brandon Gammon,
Director of Technology
Systems and Infrastructure
Koch Trucking



Challenge

Link many sites with one network

Koch Trucking, Inc. is the core business in Koch (pronounced “cook”) Companies, a family-owned business based in Minnesota. From humble beginnings, the company now serves customers in most of the U.S., transporting their goods along America’s highways. The company offers long-haul and regional services as well as specialized transportation services, such as shipping recreational boats across the country.

“The Kochs started by selling rope and chain in the 1950s,” said Brandon Gammon, Director of Technology Systems and Infrastructure for the firm. “We actually still sell rope and chain (in other divisions), but that little business in the 50s grew into this big operation today.”

Koch Trucking has embraced technology as part of its operations and brand. It provides a variety of tracking and imaging capabilities so customers can stay up to date on how their cargo is traveling.

“Koch Trucking is always interested in new technologies,” Gammon said. “That’s one of the growth drivers in the business over the years.”

The company owns sites in over 30 states ranging from urban or suburban to rural settings. A given site’s location often impacts the options for networking. Because of that, they operate a hybrid network with a mix of MPLS, T1 and broadband. The inability to integrate the hybrid network creates management issues, especially as Koch Trucking attempts to leverage headquarter’s services, such as VoIP, across all its sites to lower costs and decrease the need for local IT support in these locations.

“We cannot afford downtime anywhere,” Gammon said. “So, redundancy in any device’s ability to access the network is incredibly important. That led Koch Trucking to upgrade the network with SD-WAN as an overlay.”

Solution

Managed SD-WAN provides control, performance and reliability

Koch Trucking quickly settled on Lumen® Managed SD-WAN as their overlay network. Koch wanted more than one connection per device to ensure uptime, and this solution seamlessly created an integrated hybrid network incorporating the MPLS and broadband transport for greater efficiency and performance, while providing centralized security, control and visibility for all locations.

While Koch looked at other providers, choosing Lumen was an easy decision. Personnel not only implemented SD-WAN capability of common security policies at every location, but also helped streamline Koch Trucking’s routing of traffic through its headquarters firewall.

Results and future plans

Upgraded phones everywhere and higher efficiency at small branches

With SD-WAN, Koch Trucking was able to share their VoIP phone system across sites, replacing 20-year-old phones at smaller locations. SD-WAN allowed broadband connectivity to be used at some sites.

“With a three-person office, you just can’t spend lots of money to do upgrades,” Gammon said. “We were able to upgrade their phone systems at little to no added cost.”

SD-WAN also makes evaluating potential expansions in the business easier. Koch now essentially has one platform that can expand with whatever connectivity options are available at a new site.

“No one consults IT on merger and acquisition activity,” Gammon said. “Usually we’re going in and picking up the pieces. With SD-WAN and a full range of support services, we can increase productivity at a new site immediately.”

Expansion is always in the future for Koch Trucking. But, the IT team is not worried.

Lumen Solution Set

- Lumen Managed SD-WAN
- Lumen® MPLS IP/VPN
- Voice services