

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interview on behalf of Qwest

Greg Wnuck

City of Los Angeles

Senior Communications Engineer

Last updated: 2008 Nov 24



Product(s): iQ: Internet Port, iQ: Private Port
Industry: Government

1. Business need

"We support a network of 40,000 employees--actually about 25,000 nodes or computers--and virtually any service imaginable is required by this diverse network of staff members. And in particular, we have a need to support a Washington, D.C. office for our mayor's office, and that required an upgrade from an old 56K connection to T1-level services. The performance was out of date--it was an old circuit connection--and it was also very expensive; DS0 mapped all the way from Washington, D.C. to downtown Los Angeles. So the performance was low and the cost was high. The only thing good about that old service was it was reliable. And we also had a need for diversity in Internet connectivity for the entire enterprise at a different geographical location than our existing Internet connection was at that time."

2. Evaluation & selection

"We have a minimum requirement of reliability that had to be met, and that's often tested by customer satisfaction in the case of the mayor's Washington, D.C. office. Then the second would be performance, and then third would be cost.

We could've obtained services through our local LEC. We didn't want to use the LEC for the San Pedro Internet connection because we have the LEC at the downtown location and we wanted to find a carrier with different infrastructure and a different POP; in case the one carrier went down, there's a greater likelihood that the other carrier would still be able to provide Internet service to the enterprise. In the case of our Washington, D.C. connection, we were more or less limited to a few contracts and the carrier associated with those contracts. And Qwest having a CMAS state contract was available to us to inquire about. We really did not have enough time to go through a formal RFP process; that would take on the order of a year. So we were looking to leverage existing State of California contracts, and fortunately Qwest appeared on the State of California CMAS contract and we were able to order the products through that vehicle."

3. Why Qwest?

"Qwest offered services in both these cases that fit our needs as far as quality and reliability, and we were pleasantly surprised at the cost. The pricing was very competitive compared to what the alternatives were for us, and that more or less closed the deal."

4. The implementation/installation

"The implementation for our San Pedro Internet connectivity was dependent upon the LEC. Actually, Qwest was purchasing part of the infrastructure as resold services, and that was timelined by the LEC down in San Pedro. The timing more or less did appear as Qwest described it at the beginning, and they did attempt to expedite it at our request, and it did fit within our planning, so we were satisfied with that. In a similar fashion, the Washington, D.C. connection pretty much was done in accordance with the schedule that was discussed with Qwest early on.

We didn't have any significant issues in the installation; everything pretty much went as expected and we coordinated closely with the local sales and technical staff. They were in contact with us on a weekly basis; exchanged e-mails promptly, within a day when we asked for an update on schedules."

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5. Overview of solution

"We have the two solutions in place. The first one ordered was the Washington, D.C. connection where we needed to access across country at T1 level service because we outgrew the DS0 level 56-kilobit service.

The Internet connection's basically two ends of iQ Internet port [Qwest iQ Networking® Internet Port] in San Pedro--Internet service at the DS3 level, it would be an Internet port. That's IP networking Internet port for T1 transport services between two points; it's a point-to-point connection. So basically Qwest is just providing VPN services across the Internet."

6. Customer service

"I think our local representative has been very attentive. Whenever I inquire, as I did this last week, about other Qwest services, he makes an effort to contact whatever staff are necessary in any Qwest organization and gets back within a day or so. So I'm pretty happy with his response. We have actually not had an occasion to escalate a trouble ticket. Those two services have been in operation for approximately a year, and I checked with our maintenance staff and they have not had a planned or unplanned down period of either of those two services, so we're happy about that part."

7. Non-financial benefits

"Well, non-tangible would be the interface with the local account team. They provide good service for us in the way of gathering information about what technical options are available from Qwest and describing where and when they could be implemented, and also giving rough ideas of the pricing before we actually have to go down the road to signing any contracts. So we need that information in order to compare vendors and compare solutions, so that's been helpful.

We haven't had any complaints with the current configuration. We did try to set up a private VPN connectivity ourselves with DSL in Washington, D.C. The staff out there found it to be inadequate. It wasn't reliable enough and its performance wasn't good enough for their needs. They have not complained since the Internet iQ product [Qwest iQ Networking Internet Port] has been set up for them."

8. Measurable benefits

"It takes a weight off our maintenance staff; they don't have to respond internally to trouble tickets the more reliable the service is, and we can actually have less staffing when it comes to maintenance and support in our own NOC when we have fewer outages.

The price for both these services was on the order of half of what we could see on other provider solutions, so given the quality of the service and the pricing, we very quickly became a Qwest customer on these particular contracts."

9. Areas for improvement

"It would help if their infrastructure was more extensive in our particular geographic area so that they could provide a wider array of private iQ services. I understand that that's a lot to expect a company to build out the equivalent to a LEC's infrastructure."

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10. Future plans

"Well, right now we're evaluating Qwest along with some other providers to take over a legacy RLAN infrastructure of 240 nodes, so we welcome Qwest's participation and offering solutions to us to replace that older infrastructure. We have new projects all the time, so as long as we have a contract vehicle like the CMAS where we can include Qwest as a potential solution provider for connectivity for our 50-plus departments, then we'll be happy to do that."

11. Recommendations and advice

"Don't always look to the LEC because some of the other providers, like Qwest, at times will be competitive with pricing and you may be able to do better. So keep the door open."