

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interview on behalf of Qwest

Gail Contreras

Valley Solvents and Chemicals

Human Resources

Last updated: 2008 Nov 24



Product(s): iQ: Enhanced Port
Industry: Services

1. Business need

"The main problem we were having is we were sharing T1 lines. We were losing data packets from our main source down here up to our district, and we spent more time down or reports not printing; information just not getting where it needed to be to be able to service our customers and we just couldn't keep going like that, so we needed to upgrade badly. I feel that if you have a computer system down at your base and it's not able to help your districts do their job, that's poor internal customer service, so we were looking at just spending more time being down, trying to correct problems, trying to redo things than doing it once and keep going."

2. Evaluation & selection

"The main criteria was somebody that could come in here that knew what they were talking about, explain to us in detail, in layman's terms, so everyone would be on the same page and understand what was going to happen--and also to expedite it. It was something, once the decision was made that we definitely needed to upgrade, it was like 'Okay, let's go. Let's move on it.' Because we were having that many problems that it was so frustrating to the districts, we just needed to move on it real fast. And also, obviously, value.

We had a gentleman that we had worked with originally when we signed on with Qwest for our virtual private network, and we called him up and he came out and he gave us a couple of different options that we could go with, and MPLS was probably the most common sense one to go to. So from there, we looked at who could be a couple of the possible vendors that we could talk to on this, and see who could come in and speak with us, and who was even willing to deal with us is another thing. So we ended up going with AT&T and then having Qwest come in and talk to us, and then we compared from there."

3. Why Qwest?

"We had known from past experience that Qwest delivered value and service for us. They're well known, obviously, in the industry for this type of product. We had looked at one other company and when they came out, I just wasn't impressed with how they were delivering it, and when we would ask them questions, 'You have this? What? Well, we can look at that later.' And I thought 'No, you can't look at that later. You've got to know what we've got now so we don't have any more hitches when we go for installation.'

The pricing was better from Qwest and, again, just having been involved with Qwest before, I felt more secure. I didn't want to make a change like this and then go to somebody brand new at the time; I would rather stay with somebody that was used to the way our setup was, etc. And it just put me in a more comfortable position."

4. The implementation/installation

"The implementation wasn't bad, except that we had one hitch, and that was from not ever doing this before on my end and it involved our demark lines. I had assumed everything was going to be done by Qwest, and that's my problem for assuming it. Next time, I know better. Now that I know the full scope of what it takes to do this, I know the questions to ask. Other than that, the sales rep and the engineers that we worked with and the people that sold the routers, etc., they were fantastic with us. They were there all the time for us.

Our base site is down here in Combes or Harlingen, Texas. That's where all the routers were shipped to first.

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From there, each router was noted, cataloged, and then we sent them up to our districts. Once they were there, we had complete instructions and we had people on site from the router company that sat there and programmed these and made sure that everything was right. Once that took place, then I had a list of instructions; where we disconnected the VPN, we made sure that the T1 lines were all set up, which Qwest did in the interim; changed out the routers; started doing our pinging; spent a couple nights trying to get it to change. It was as swift as it could go."

5. Overview of solution

"We have the iQ Enhanced MPLS networking. We've got it implemented in Combes; Corpus Christi, Texas; and Forth Worth, Texas. We also have our long-distance service with Qwest on there. Qwest is doing the firewall management for us on this. We purchased three routers, the NetVanta 3200."

6. Customer service

"Just one word: Excellent. I don't have anything bad to say. They have always been there when I've needed them. I get immediate response, and if the problem isn't solvable right then and there, they do everything, as far as I'm concerned, to the best of their ability to get our company back up and running as quickly as possible. I've gotten notifications in the middle of the night on my phone telling me that the problem's fixed and everything is fine.

If I have one thing to say about the customer service, it's if you're going to phone in, if you aren't a regular IT person and understand all the jargon, you can get lost through the prompts.

We escalated the reinstallation in our Fort Worth department and Qwest was fantastic for us. They worked with the telephone companies, they got the lines in there, they got another router to us ASAP. I couldn't have asked for anything better.

The Qwest technical competency, as far as I'm concerned, is as high as it can get. They have solved all of our problems and come up with solutions for us that I would never even be able to dream about."

7. Non-financial benefits

"Speaking for Valley Solvents, the intangible benefits that we've had--and this is the biggest one and is probably the major one--we've been able to focus on our business rather than trying to focus to get our system working. I know our AP manager is excited about the invoicing that is coming through from Qwest now with the MPLS, rather than the VPN that we had previously. It's a much clearer invoicing for her."

8. Measurable benefits

"Number one, we saved money. We can work more efficiently. The price of our ports were cheaper than what we were having for the VPN. We saved money on our long distance by going with this. The loop price itself is 17 percent less for all three districts per month--and for a small company, that's a lot of money.

The impact of the new services--for me to have to come out to the office on the weekends to get the computer up and running for a district is almost nonexistent now. I don't spend all of my day trying to get somebody up during the work week even. I can concentrate on human resources now, and we've got a lot of happy people over in our district.

Previously, I was probably out here every weekend for some reason. I would spend at least a couple hours every weekend out here, and during the week, I would have problems every day. I could come in in the morning and I would



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come in early and the system wasn't up for the districts to start their daily work, which put everybody behind because we'd have bills of lading; customers were waiting; trucks are waiting; warehousemen are waiting; and people are getting aggravated. The reason we were down most of the time was loss of connection and loss of data packets, and we attributed that to the connections that we had."

9. Areas for improvement

"The people on the phone service are great. For me to get to the specific area, not being an IT person--and I realize that Qwest probably can't do it both ways; most companies have their own IT person or somebody that probably is a little bit more educated in this than I am--so the only other thing that I could say that would be an improvement for me would have been the use of the phone prompts, as to what departments I need to get to when I have a problem. I'll go through a series of different departments at Qwest until we finally get to why one line is down or why we're not being able to ping from one district to the other or back down here."

10. Recommendations and advice

"Ask as many questions as you possibly can; try and think this through. If you've got telephone lines, figure out where that's coming from. If you're going to have new equipment, who's going to be doing that? Where do the contracts come from? What does it all involve? I would tell them if you've got a salesman that comes in and offers you a solution to something, have them go item by item and give as much detail as possible. If you don't understand something, just ask every question that you can possibly conceive of."



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