How a flexible and responsive approach to business needs dramatically improved network performance

Challenge

Network stability affecting productivity

Dialog's business is founded on its design engineers who are located in approximately 40 global locations. The company's engineers work collaboratively on chip designs across different locations, using the remote access solution Exceed onDemand, which is reliant on good network performance to function well.

Dialog was using more than 60 different vendors around the world to connect its employees, but as the company grew, this presented it with a range of challenges, particularly around ensuring consistent quality of service.

"The range of providers meant it was becoming harder for us to deliver a good service to our internal customers — across all these suppliers we didn't have well-documented, defensible service levels."

-Andrew Bray, Vice President, Global Information Technology, Dialog

"The nature of our engineers' work requires very predictable speeds, but we were facing unpredictable performance," said Andrew Bray, Vice President of Global Information Technology at Dialog. "If the engineers' design tools lagged because of network issues, it could create a very difficult work environment that would make it hard for them to do their jobs properly."

Mixed-signal semiconductor design

Dialog is a semiconductor company that develops highly integrated products for consumer electronics. Its technologies contribute to extending battery life in portable devices and providing efficient connectivity in IoT applications. Since it aims to enable its customers to differentiate and move fast to market, the agility of its own business is critical.

It was also difficult to resolve issues. "We were getting to a stage where if there was a problem there were too many different vendors to get an effective resolution," said Bray.

"No one would take responsibility and it was becoming complicated to manage. We also saw hard outages more regularly than we would have liked, and with that many providers there was no immediate failover to another circuit. Inevitably, that had an impact on the business."

Dialog wanted to find a provider that could match its global presence as it scaled. The company decided it needed a shake-up of its network services.

CenturyLink®

Solution

Proof of concept to demonstrate capability

As a veteran of many RFPs, Bray knew the drawbacks of this process. "We could spend a year going through the RFP, but we could still end up with a supplier that isn't the right partner for us and couldn't necessarily deliver everything they promised on paper," he said.

So, Bray took a new approach. "There are a number of credible players in this space, so I decided we should do our due diligence and find a provider that we felt we could work with on a human level, then have a proof of concept (PoC). I was looking for a player that would work as a partner with us, and that could fully understand what we wanted and could commit to that.

"The first time I met the team from CenturyLink, I felt very comfortable with them. When I explained how I wanted to go forward it would have been very easy for them to say we don't work like this, but there was a willingness to listen and try it. I think that was one of the most critical things — there was a good working relationship because both sides were willing to see how we could make this work. So, a lot of the success was down to people."

CenturyLink agreed to a proof of concept (PoC) to deliver connectivity to four sites with mixed business use cases in different locations — two in Europe and two in the U.S. — based on agreed SLAs. CenturyLink also provided project and service management and enhanced technical support.

The PoC was successfully completed and the full solution is now being rolled out across all of Dialog's global sites. The solution provides a fully diverse IP VPN network delivering MPLS and internet services, as well as CenturyLink Adaptive Network Security to some locations.

"Inevitably there were a few challenges during the PoC, and in many ways this was a positive because it helped both sides to understand each other better and to grasp the requirements more clearly," Bray said. "This solidified the relationship and we became a much better team as a result, which meant the stage is set for a smoother global rollout."

"There are a number of credible players in this space, so I decided we should do our due diligence and find a provider that we felt we could work with on a human level."

- Andrew Bray, Vice President, Global Information Technology, Dialog

---

Benefits

Reliability allowing new ways of working

In the four sites served by CenturyLink, Dialog has seen a 25 percent performance improvement. "That means much better speed consistency – when we look at the charts they're very, verysmooth," said Bray. "Now the network speed and consistency is significantly improved, our engineers can get their jobs done with a higher degree of predictability."

CenturyLink®