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EYECARE PARTNERS LLC

INDUSTRY
Healthcare

HEADQUARTERS
St. Louis, Missouri

KEY CHALLENGES
- Struggling to rapidly scale as the company grows
- Traditional network architecture for 450 offices became costly
- Need to deploy and manage new sites easily

BUSINESS RESULTS
- Flexible network allowing additional types of connectivity and agile technology
- A unified pool of bandwidth, enterprise-grade cloud performance, and simplified branch services
- Significantly faster deployments to support rapid growth

EyeCare Partners Supports Branch Site Deployments with SD-WAN

As a leading business partner for optometry and ophthalmology practices, EyeCare Partners provides business support that helps medically minded practitioners grow rapidly. The private equity-backed optometry, ophthalmology, and ambulatory surgery center operation grew tremendously over the last two years and now provides care to patients in over 450 sites across 14 U.S. states. This fast growth and commitment to providing world-class business support services became a major driver for improving the cost efficiency, complexity, and speed of their networking infrastructure.

After more than doubling the number of practices they support, the company began to feel the strain of their costly network architecture supporting individual offices. Managing all aspects of business operations, including IT and office support functions, meant they needed a way to deploy and manage new sites easily. EyeCare Partners worked with a managed service provider, Meriplex, to implement and manage VMware SD-WAN™ by VeloCloud®. As an industry leader, VMware SD-WAN proved the ideal solution to support EyeCare Partners' growing IT infrastructure.

Doubling sites strained existing infrastructure

Two years ago, EyeCare Partners supported only 220 sites. As their network infrastructure grew to support 450 sites, networking costs became a significant driver. Inefficiencies made site deployment and maintenance difficult to scale. The existing Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) enterprise circuits had long lead times. To scale the network in this environment translated to additional construction costs, build costs, and even more time to install. The costs of those circuits also limited their redundancy and ability to provide backup connectivity. When the company started evaluating their network in terms of cost, complexity, and integration speed, they knew they needed something more flexible—a solution that would enable additional types of connectivity and agile technology.

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"We've seen a decrease in the complexity of our network. More importantly, Meriplex is managing our VMware SD-WAN environment for us. That has greatly improved our ability to troubleshoot and diagnose issues with a real-time proactive monitoring solution."

JEFF ANSLINGER
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE
SERVICES AND ACTING DIRECTOR FOR IT
COMPLIANCE AND SECURITY,
EYECARE PARTNERS

Running a proof of concept with VMware SD-WAN

After determining software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) could provide better agility and efficiency for deploying and managing their growing network of sites, EyeCare Partners began evaluating which solution would fit their needs. They ran proofs of concept (PoCs) at different sites to evaluate three different solutions. The end goal was to find a robust and flexible SD-WAN solution.

After this initial test, EyeCare Partners chose VMware SD-WAN. It was the ideal solution to deploy sites more quickly, at higher speeds and cheaper costs. A second, more in-depth PoC showed that VMware SD-WAN could meet more specific needs such as increased visibility requirements.

Implementing VMware SD-WAN across branch sites

EyeCare Partners and Meriplex designed a custom implementation plan for deploying VMware SD-WAN at the 450 sites across their network.

The company's VMware SD-WAN implementation has a stateful firewall and additional security features built into it with every office getting a VMware SD-WAN appliance. The IT team provides high availability to some sites depending on what the practice does and what their needs are. Each site gets two circuits, a stateful firewall, and Zscaler integration, which delivers the entire security stack as a cloud service to secure Internet traffic and deliver a fast user experience.

EyeCare Partners has separate networks for voice, data, guest access, and production access. Further segmentation gives medical devices and electronic medical record (EMR) solutions their own data paths, helping EyeCare partners comply with critical healthcare regulations.

EyeCare Partners and Meriplex have currently deployed VMware SD-WAN at over 200 offices—ahead of schedule. Even dealing with factors that have slowed down the overall economy, Meriplex and VMware have helped keep the project on track.

EyeCare Partners realizes the benefits of VMware SD-WAN

As EyeCare Partners continues to deploy VMware SD-WAN to their branch sites, they already see significant benefits. Early in the project, they realized their goals of increasing flexibility and the speed at which they can deploy new sites.

The company has reduced the time it takes to bring circuits in place. There is more flexibility in identifying the data circuits needed and accelerated speed of circuit installation. VMware SD-WAN lets EyeCare Partners aggregate multiple circuits under one device. It allows for the use of commodity broadband, delivered more quickly at higher speeds and cheaper costs. Because of increased redundancy, EyeCare Partners can have multiple circuits aggregated through VMware SD-WAN and feel confident that they can offer each of their practices a reliable class of service around voice and data.

In addition, they have seen a decrease in the complexity of their network. Before VMware SD-WAN, they relied on a site-to-site virtual private network (VPN) connection. This made it difficult to determine the root cause of connectivity issues and troubleshoot problems. With VMware SD-WAN in place, they now have a central console they can go to for examining connectivity and managing each site.

As part of the project, Meriplex is managing EyeCare Partners' VMware SD-WAN environment and data circuits. This has greatly improved how EyeCare Partners troubleshoots and diagnoses issues and offers a real time, proactive monitoring solution.

MERIPLEX

Meriplex is a managed IT and SD-WAN solutions provider, based in Houston, TX. They specialize in intelligent networks, cybersecurity, cloud communications, and managed services for the enterprise market.

Agile and efficient branch sites with VMware SD-WAN

With hundreds of sites to deploy and manage, EyeCare Partners couldn't afford to deal with the expensive bandwidth costs, complex infrastructure, and unpredictable application performance of a traditional wide area network (WAN).

With VMware SD-WAN, they can support each of their optometry and ophthalmology practices with a virtual WAN for a unified pool of bandwidth, enterprise-grade cloud performance, and simplified branch services. With Meriplex managing VMware SD-WAN deployments and their existing infrastructure, EyeCare Partners can set up networks much faster to support their rapid growth.

Learn how your company can benefit from the simplicity and flexibility of VMware SD-WAN today.

For more information about VMware SD-WAN, visit *www.velocloud.com*.