

Company Profile: Corporate Network Services provides managed services, network support, application development, and training to organizations in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

Website: www.cornetser.com

Business Challenge: As a traditional break-fix service provider reliant on hands-on maintenance, on-site visits and hourly billing rates, Corporate Network Services struggled to provide efficient IT support for its clients, limiting its employees' productivity, margins and ultimately the growth of the company. The business model was simply too labor-intensive to increase profits in an increasingly expensive Washington-area business environment, and unfortunately, an attempt to transform the company to a managed service provider with N-able failed.

Solution: Corporate Network Services deployed an automatic managed service provider (MSP) solution from Kaseya that gives its administrators a single management tool to monitor, maintain, secure and back up all its customers' systems; providing the framework for the company's transformation to a more economical MSP business model. The company also leverages Kaseya's IT Monitor Assist service, allowing the company to monitor and protect its customers' systems around the clock without using more staffing resources. Corporate Network Services can now grow its customer base and services portfolio with a more efficient service delivery model without hiring additional costly consultants.



IT Service Provider Replaces N-able with Kaseya MSP Solution

Lauds Ease of Deployment, Intuitive Interface and Automatic Features

Using a variety of remote management tools like Symantec's pcAnywhere, Netopia Timbuktu and free software that came pre-packaged with hardware, Corporate Network Services was like any typical break-fix IT service provider. The Washington, D.C.,-based company leaned on basic or unsophisticated management solutions with limited functionality to solve complex network issues remotely while relying on time-consuming hands-on scheduled maintenance to reliably manage its customers' environments. As a result, Corporate Network Services relied on an inefficient break-fix business model dependent on hourly rates and administrators who knew the fastest routes across town.

"We quickly realized that our business model was broken," said Jason Tierney, vice president of consulting services, Corporate Network Services. "Salaries in the Washington area were rising and were eating away our profit margins, and we couldn't just go out and get more customers without hiring more consultants. The MSP model was enticing, but we lacked the technology to proactively manage our customers' environments."

After speaking with a salesman from N-able, a provider of MSP management software, Tierney started to roll out a solution that would give his team of administrators reliable remote access to their customers' systems while streamlining maintenance—all in an effort to eliminate on-site visits and make his team more proactive and more productive. The efficiencies would allow the company to add customers without additional hires and eventually increase margins.

Or so Tierney was sold. Twelve months years later, the N-able solution was only 12 percent deployed, requiring a dedicated administrator to update, administer and manage the management solution. The additional management actually added more work to his already tapped staff, resulting in a decrease—rather than an increase—in margins.

"I couldn't believe the difference in how the product was sold to how it actually worked," he said. "We literally crossed our fingers each morning when we came in hoping that everything was ok. It was clunky, inefficient and didn't work half the time. I would definitely recommend other service providers go another direction."

Truly Automated MSP Solution

Even before its licenses were up, Corporate Network Services replaced N-able with an automatic MSP solution from Kaseya, giving its administrators an intuitive and complete platform in which to remotely monitor, maintain, backup and secure its customers' IT environments from a central Web-based management console. Within one week of downloading Kaseya's trial package, Tierney was confident enough in the product to roll it out with the first customer and soon after launched PROSuite, the company's first true managed service. Less than three months later, all 30 customers were being managed remotely through the Kaseya solution.

"The Kaseya solution literally did the job N-able was supposed to, except reliably and efficiently," Tierney said. "The solution takes days, not months, to deploy and is easy to maintain. We don't have to think about it. We just know that it is updated automatically and is always available."

Corporate Network Services maintains a network operations center (NOC) in Poolesville, Maryland, that provides central management of 1,000 distributed servers and workstations in 35 customer environments. The Kaseya low-footprint agent allows administrators to remotely manage each environment individually or as one network, helping to streamline administrative tasks like patch management and monitoring. As a result, basic maintenance that used to take days or weeks to complete, now take minutes, allowing administrators to spend their time managing more customer environments or working on more proactive projects.

Kaseya integrates seamlessly with Corporate Network Services' custom ticketing solution, consolidating all aspects of systems management under one interface. When an end user issues a ticket, it is automatically routed to the appropriate administrator who can immediately troubleshoot and resolve the issue. The Kaseya solution helps organize and track the tickets, ensuring that the most critical problems are dealt with accordingly. Detailed reporting through Kaseya also helps keep track of recurring problems and streamlines billing.

Corporate Network Services also takes advantage of Kaseya's IT Monitor Assist—a service where Kaseya administrators monitor the MSP's customers' systems overnight and during the weekend. The service automatically alerts Corporate Network Services of any performance spikes or downtime through emails and phone calls, eliminating the need for the MSP to pay their administrators overtime for being on call. According to Tierney, the service helps get systems back up and running quickly and is a necessary fall back plan for maintaining aggressive customer service levels. Often, downtime is resolved before the customer is even aware there is a problem.

Backups are also automated through the Kaseya solution, working with Symantec's Backup Exec to create images of each workstation that can be restored quickly in case of system loss. Recently, Tierney was able to restore an entire laptop that was stolen—including operating system, applications, user settings and 6 GBs of data—in less than an hour. Needless to say, the customer—who was on his way to an important sales meeting—was extremely pleased.

Productive Employees, A Scalable Business and Improved Margins

By embracing the Kaseya Managed Service Framework, Corporate Network Services is able to provide a quality and consistent service, ultimately enabling the company to add five new customers over the past year without hiring additional staff. This has led to a 40 percent increase in profit margins per consultant, allowing the business to operate, make money and grow in the competitive Washington-area business environment.

Streamlining service delivery and automating network administration is not the only way the MSP saves money. Operational expenses related to traveling to customer sites such as gas, mileage reimbursements and non-billable hours have dramatically been reduced, further saving money and improving margins. Employees are happier since they don't have to brave the congested roads each day to get to client sites.

"Moving to an MSP business model through the Kaseya solution allowed us to go from six consultants constantly on the road, going from customer site to customer site, to five consultants in the office at their desks and only one administrator on the road," Tierney said. "Plus, we're able to do everything we

Key Benefits

- The new business model has allowed the company to add five new customers in one year without increasing staffing
- Margins per employee have increased 40 percent since deploying Kaseya and moving an MSP business model
- IT Monitor Assist provides 24x7 monitoring, improving customer uptime
- Proactive management allows administrators to identify, troubleshoot and resolve issues before they lead to downtime

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Corporate Network Services

need to do from nine to five, Monday through Friday, saving the evenings and weekends for our families. There's no more coming in on Saturday to roll out a patch. Kaseya allows us to automate the process in mere minutes during the week."

Corporate Network Services is now able to process and resolve 55 tickets per day for 35 customers, a major productivity increase over its break-fix days. In addition, administrators spend less time issuing patches or upgrading desktops, instead working on more proactive and preventative projects.

The efficiencies have also led to better service and less downtime for its customers' IT systems. Shortly after deploying Kaseya with a new customer, Tierney received an alert that several servers had shut down overnight in the client's data center but had rebooted by the morning. This kept occurring over the course of a week until Tierney decided to visit the data center to check it out for himself.

Upon walking into the server room, a blast of heat almost knocked him off his feet. Tierney later found out that workers were doing on-going work on the building and were shutting down the air conditioning each night, causing the server room to heat up and the servers to shut down. The problem was quickly fixed, but without Kaseya, there's no telling how long the servers had been shutting down and how long it would have continued. It likely would have taken the servers to melt off the rack until the downtime could have been identified and diagnosed.

Kaseya also provides transparency throughout the network, giving Corporate Network Services an up-to-date snapshot of each customer environment at any time. This allows the MSP to sit down with each client and analyze their systems based on current and future IT needs and business goals—a valuable service that helps position the MSP as a trusted business partner.

"Kaseya provides the visibility into our customer environments and the functionality we need to efficiently provide a true managed service—something that other vendors couldn't deliver," Tierney said.