



GEORGE &
MATILDA
EYECARE

INDUSTRY

Retail / Healthcare

CHALLENGES

- Complex and high-cost MPLS network
- Data center centric model
- Long deployment times for newly acquired optometry practices

RESULTS

- Standardized and consistent network configurations enable doctors to focus on patient needs
- High return on investment
- Enables a full cloud-based SaaS network model removing the bottleneck of the data center and associated costs
- Eliminates dependency on hardware and its related costs and upgrade cycle
- Strong security posture
- Future-proofing the network for continued growth

Supporting a Full SaaS-Based Network Topology with VMware SD-WAN

Unifying independent branch outlets under one common software as a service (SaaS) model, introducing efficiency and cost-savings.

Problem situation

George & Matilda Eyecare is an Australian based company, challenging the norm in the optometry retail industry by consolidating independent optometry offices under one brand name to deliver optimized service to optometrists, their staff, and patients. In under three years, George & Matilda has grown to nearly 70 practices, differentiating itself through a unique and streamlined cloud-based supply chain and patient communications platforms.

Traditionally, each individual optometrist office managed its entire IT infrastructure, order management, supply ordering, and other functions. Offices lacked IT standards, often used analog lines, and were handled either by a family friend or through a third party. Identifying issues on the network was extremely difficult and if a connection was lost, all business came to a halt.

George & Matilda sought to revolutionize these dynamics by acquiring independent optometry businesses and applying a consistent IT infrastructure to all branches, implementing a cloud-based supply chain that would streamline transactions, frames suppliers, lens suppliers, and delivery of patient jobs to the branches. To support this initiative, George & Matilda implemented its network infrastructure using Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) as the technology. The cost with this option was very high at \$180 a month for 1MB/1MB and up to \$1,000 a month for higher bandwidth options.

This option limited George & Matilda's long-term networking goals and the business began a search for a different IT model that was completely cloud centric and SaaS-based to differentiate the business.

“We knew from the time of POC that the VMware SD-WAN solution was going to give us what we needed to drive George & Matilda’s current and future network growth strategy.”

TONY CRVELIN
GENERAL MANAGER OF IT,
GEORGE & MATILDA

“VMware SD-WAN has transformed our network and ability to support our optometrist community so that they can focus on taking care of patients rather than whether or not there is an outage that will stop them from doing their job. Coevolve as partners have been highly responsive, with pragmatic expert advice to help us drive the best return on our IT spend.”

GEOFF GREENBERG
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER,
GEORGE & MATILDA

Solution selection and implementation: Coevolve and VMware SD-WAN

George & Matilda Eyecare knew it had to make a change to its existing infrastructure to meet both current business requirements and enable future growth. To transform its business and standardize the environment, a consistent IT network configuration throughout each independent optometry practice was needed. George & Matilda’s goals were to:

- Support a fully streamlined SaaS-based supply chain
- Eliminate its MPLS installation to realize cost savings
- Standardize network configurations
- Accelerate the integration of newly-acquired independent offices into the network

George & Matilda turned to Coevolve, a managed service provider helping enterprise clients adopt next-generation networks throughout Australia, New Zealand, South East Asia and North America. After much research and six-month proof of concept (POCs) with both a competitive software-defined wide area network (SD-WAN) vendor and VMware SD-WAN™ by VeloCloud®, George & Matilda moved forward with the VMware SD-WAN solution.

Coevolve, with VMware SD-WAN, and a cloud-delivered architecture transformed the network from one of variable optometry practice setups to a consistent infrastructure with full visibility, high levels of bandwidth, and streamlined supply chain management using standard Internet connections.

All 57 of the existing George & Matilda locations were transitioned to VMware SD-WAN and as the company looks to continue its growth with a target of 250 branches over the next five years, it is confident that it will be able to do so with its new networking infrastructure.

Standard VMware SD-WAN benefits

VMware SD-WAN offers immediate and significant benefits to its users. With Coevolve’s help in implementing VMware SD-WAN, George & Matilda now has a robust and secure network that has provided greater redundancy, increased levels of bandwidth, high scalability to support more and more optometry practices, efficiency of network processes and ordering processes, fast deployment for new locations, and all at a lower cost.

Focus on strengths

Before VMware SD-WAN, each branch practice was responsible for each network activity, which took the focus off each team’s core strength of managing patient care. Optometrists and other staff had to sometimes play IT technician if no one else was designated or had to place orders for the eyeglass supplies they needed. However, with the implementation of a managed solution that centralized network control and monitoring, optometrists can now focus their attention on dealing with patients rather than troubleshooting outages.

Return on investment

Prior to installing VMware SD-WAN, George & Matilda were spending significant budget on deploying MPLS. Middle of the road average costs were about \$220 per month for an MPLS line. However, with the move to VMware SD-WAN and utilizing simple broadband lines with 4G as backup, the savings for the practices within the group (57 sites) were in excess of 114 percent in some cases per year. As the company continues to add more and more optometry offices and make the conversion to VMware SD-WAN, the savings continue to increase, solidly justifying the investment in the technology.

“Coevolve has been delighted in the results we’ve delivered with VMware SD-WAN for a dynamic, growth business like George & Matilda. Our work here demonstrates our role as a leading provider of fully integrated, non-telco SD-WAN solutions for enterprises.”

TIM SULLIVAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, COEVOLVE



PARTNER

Coevolve was founded in 2014 to help enterprises adopt next-generation networking technologies like SD-WAN. It provides an Integrated SD-WAN Solution with a modular managed service, along with industry-leading professional services capabilities.

Coevolve has clients in 55 countries on six continents and has helped clients in many industry verticals adopt SD-WAN to deliver significant business benefit.

Coevolve has a global team of experts, with offices in Sydney, Chicago, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

Cloud-based SaaS support

George & Matilda has a corporate initiative to move all of its network infrastructure to the cloud, to turn themselves into a SaaS-managed company. This required a move from a data center-focused model to one that uses the Internet without infrastructure on-site, except for a single hub at each location.

Vendor partners are sought that provide only SaaS services and assist in supporting this type of infrastructure. The vendor portfolio now includes Amazon Web Services (AWS), Office 365, and NetSuite. With this type of network model, George & Matilda limits its exposure to hardware costs as there is no need to repair devices that break down or to replace hardware every few years. It also allows George & Matilda to remain in compliance with multiple regulations including privacy acts related to health data, personally identifiable information (PII) data, and Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS).

Network visibility and uptime

George & Matilda had difficulties working with the local Telco organizations to monitor its network prior to its VMware SD-WAN implementation. Network performance was not able to be measured (for latency and jitter), response times to outages or issues were long and laborious, and activity was always reactive. Additionally, troubleshooting was difficult with logs getting lost or overwritten, and prolonged outages were impacting the business as optometrists couldn't make appointments, make calls, or place supply orders.

With Coevolve managing the solution, George & Matilda could immediately see when the Internet was out, but because the managed service provider (MSP) had installed an SD-WAN managed 4G backup solution, the outages were transparent to the branch offices as it failed over automatically. With VMware SD-WAN, not only could issues on the network be identified quickly, rules could also be put in place that limited the use of the broadband, allowing for the scheduling of certain website or applications.

Ensuring security

With the need to protect customer data and their privacy, George & Matilda needed a strong security posture to be part of the network. VMware SD-WAN ensures point-to-point encryption across the network for services that would otherwise traverse the open Internet. With this in mind George & Matilda Eyecare are continually looking to improve its security posture in an ever-changing IT landscape.

Future-proofing the network for continued growth

George & Matilda have an aggressive growth strategy, which requires that its network be built in a way to easily and quickly support the needs of the optometry practices it acquires. Its cloud-based network infrastructure is ready to support these requirements with VMware SD-WAN and because VMware SD-WAN is easy to deploy at new locations, George & Matilda is well-positioned for this growth.

For more information on VMware SD-WAN, please visit <https://www.velocloud.com/> or contact your VMware representative.