

Engen



Riverbed enables Engen to centralize IT resources and data, boosting business and IT efficiency, productivity and end-user satisfaction

Energizing The African Continent

Engen is an African-based energy group focused on the refining and marketing of petroleum and petroleum-based products. It also has an extensive retail network. Founded in 1887, Engen is the market leader in South Africa, with around 3500 employees. It exports to more than 30 territories, mostly in Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands.

Challenge: Rationalize a complex IT infrastructure

With offices in 30 Sub-Saharan African countries and Indian Ocean islands, supporting a vast network of depots, terminals, facilities and warehouses, Engen's corporate structure is complex, challenging and extensive, placing great demands on its IT infrastructure. "We have two MPLS networks for corporate and retail. The corporate network connects our branch offices, regional offices, refinery and depots," explains Nicholas Lain, Architecture Specialist at Engen.

Servicing this sprawling network of sites are eight data centers; the main one in Cape Town. Key applications such as SAPGUI, Outlook, Word and

PowerPoint are hosted at the Cape Town data center, with some specialist applications hosted locally at depots.

Many sites are long distances from the data centers, making network latency an issue, and there were other challenges, says Lain, "Some depots are in remote locations, so it was difficult to support the local IT infrastructure. Our regional offices had servers for Exchange, file and print, domain controller, SCCM and email archiving, making IT management quite complex."

"Employees wanted a better end user experience, and with Riverbed, we have been able to give them that and remove all the pain"

Nicholas Lain
Architecture Specialist at Engen

End users at the 50 depots used a thin client/Citrix solution for accessing IT resources hosted in the data center. The depots are connected to the corporate wide area network (WAN) via regional offices, exacerbating the issue of data bottlenecks. "Our helpdesk was getting lots of complaints from end users in our depots," recalls Lain, "they had sluggish access to SAP; screens would freeze and connections were dropped. Ultimately our users were very frustrated and their productivity suffered."

In Brief

Challenges

- Manage complex IT infrastructure and control costs
- Enhance user experience and boost employee productivity
- Improve backup processes and data protection
- Centralize applications and simplify delivery of services in a distributed enterprise

Solution

- Riverbed SteelFusion™ solution for Zero Branch IT
- Riverbed SteelHead™ CX

Benefits

- Decreased operational cost
- Centralization of resources
- Employee productivity with a greatly enhanced end user experience
- Data security with Improved backup processes
- 80% reduction of data across WAN provides faster application speeds and reduces bandwidth requirement

Data security was another issue adds Lain, “Our backup window was short, and we often fell behind in getting backups to Cape Town. And, when we backed-up, everything on the network slowed down. We had lots of issues to resolve, and we were finding it very difficult to fix them.”

Solution: Riverbed application performance platform for enhanced security and productivity

Centralizing more applications; rationalizing IT infrastructure; strengthening data security, and the need to enhance end-user experience prompted Engen to select Riverbed Technology. Engen already knew that WAN optimization would form a key part of the solution and initially tested Cisco WAAS, but Lain notes, “We didn’t get the results we expected; we were only getting about 30% improvement on some links.”

Extensive research and impressive proof-of-concept (POC) results convinced Engen that Riverbed® offered a solution that could address all their requirements. A POC test using Riverbed® SteelHead™ resulted in file copying time being 75x faster, with more than 50% data reduction across the WAN. Another test at a Cape Town terminal saw a 70% reduction in WAN data and a 3x increase in link speed.

Engen also recognized that only Riverbed could provide a centrally managed solution that would address their need to protect company data, while keeping employees in remote locations as productive as possible.

As a result, Engen deployed 33 SteelHead CX devices and 29 Riverbed SteelFusionEdge appliances and 4 Riverbed SteelFusion Core at strategic points on its South African WAN. “Deploying Riverbed enabled us to re-architect our IT, so that all branch offices and depots are now directly connected to the WAN,” says Lain. “The Riverbed solution was very easy to deploy – the roll-out happened very quickly, and it is incredibly stable.”

Lain was also impressed with the service and support they received. “Riverbed is the only company I know that can get equipment into South Africa within two weeks – we normally have a massive lead time of around five weeks - so the project cycle was much shorter. Riverbed customer support has been fantastic. Any issues were resolved on the first contact, and the account management team are always available to help in any way – it’s been phenomenal.”

Benefits: More efficient IT infrastructure; more productive employees

Deploying Riverbed has brought many benefits, says Lain, “With Riverbed WAN optimization through SteelHead and SteelFusion, we’ve achieved an 80% data reduction across our network, and there’s now scope for reducing our bandwidth capacity and possibly even reducing costs.” End user experience has been transformed, “Before Riverbed, we were limited in what we could provide end users. We’ve now rolled out a full Windows 7 desktop to our depots and the end user experience is the same as if employees were based at our head office. The calls from frustrated users have disappeared.”

Sending large files across the WAN is no longer an issue, adds Lain, “Our video files are centrally stored. When we sent a 50MB video file to an end user, only 60K of data went across the link – it was a huge reduction on the network. We didn’t believe it and the end user was blown away by the results.”

SteelFusion has also enabled Engen to centralize more of its IT infrastructure and improve data protection, “We’ve removed the Exchange servers from our regional offices,” explains Lain, “and we can now backup servers at any time.”

Further centralization is planned. “Our African affiliates have independent IT infrastructures with no connection to our South African network. We’ve been trialling SteelFusion in Malawi. Using SteelFusion, we’ve been able to centralize many applications and services. We’ve also brought all files from Malawi back to Cape Town using SteelFusion and backed them up.” “We’ve also given our Malawi affiliate Office 365 and purchased a SteelHead SaaS licence. Our goal is to roll out SteelFusion to all nineteen affiliates.”

Summary

Engen’s complex corporate structure placed great demands on its IT infrastructure. Employees at its depots complained about slow application speeds and their productivity suffered. Insufficient backup processes were compromising data security and many depots are long distances away, making IT support a challenge. Riverbed® SteelHead™ and Riverbed® SteelFusion™ have enabled Engen to optimize WAN traffic and centralize many resources, enabling the company to reduce costs, protect data with improved backed procedures and greatly enhance end-user experience. The Riverbed solutions have also allowed Engen to start centralizing applications, services and resources across its nineteen African affiliate countries.

About Riverbed

Riverbed, at more than \$1 billion in annual revenue, is the leader in application performance infrastructure, delivering the most complete platform for the hybrid enterprise to ensure applications perform as expected, data is always available when needed, and performance issues can be proactively detected and resolved before impacting business performance. Riverbed enables hybrid enterprises to transform application performance into a competitive advantage by maximizing employee productivity and leveraging IT to create new forms of operational agility. Riverbed’s 27,000+ customers include 97% of the Fortune 100 and 98% of the Forbes Global 100. Learn more at riverbed.com

The Riverbed logo consists of the word "riverbed" in a lowercase, bold, orange sans-serif font.