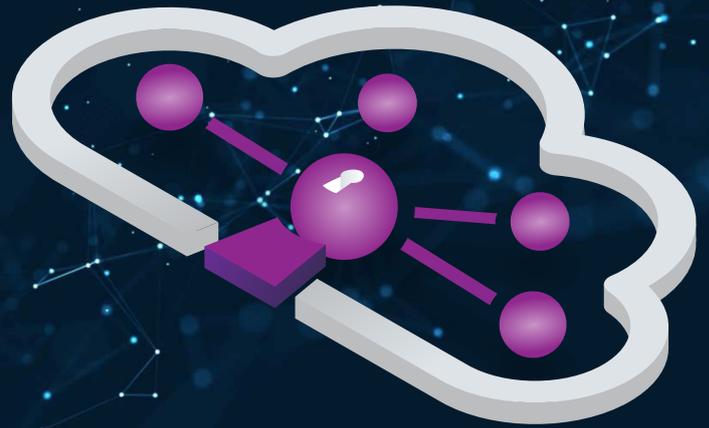


CASE STUDY

Taking the leap of faith

Leading engineering application provider explains how Azure's SD-WAN solution saved them money, time and a whole world of pain.



"A good service provider saves you more than just money," declares Greg Horner, MD of LEAP Australia, a software development firm whose switch from big telco network provision to Azure's SD-WAN brought more benefits than any business should expect. "Lower blood pressure, and an end to screaming down the phone to get things sorted—they were the big ones," he jokes.

It's very telling when the most obvious benefit of a deal is to the health and sanity of the customer. If the relationship has deteriorated to such a degree, pitching the contract should be obvious. But shifting supplier and transforming network architecture are both big decisions that take a lot of confidence that the destination is going to be worth the journey.

BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER

The bigger you get, and the more people you have relying on your systems, the harder it is to change anything. This practical and emotional technology lock-in has for years kept businesses like LEAP, which has offices in Brisbane, Sydney, Perth, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Auckland, as well as remote-working sites, in rolling contracts for their network services despite the knowledge they could get better for less elsewhere.

Established national providers rely on their size to keep customers from straying, despite providing a service that for some customers may fall short of the ideal. "For companies in our situation, finding someone else is the difficult part," Greg admits. "You need to have trust in the people and you've probably never heard of them. Competence is critical."

Azure were introduced to LEAP Australia to help solve a firewall issue. It was a small but enlightening task. In resolving one network issue they learned enough about the company to see that LEAP was struggling needlessly with a poor deal for indifferent but expensive network connectivity.

"Azure showed us an alternative option that would solve a lot of our problems and save us a lot of money. It was a decision we were able to make quickly... instead of an expensive MPLS link at 50Mb, we could be on gigabit internet, 20 times the capacity for roughly half the cost."

While the numbers may be alluring alone, switching to a relatively unknown supplier and a totally different network architecture demands more than an enticing offer. Trust in the potential of the new relationship came from discussions: "Azure's team gave clear responses to questions," Greg explains. "It was obvious that they knew what they were talking about and their ability to deliver was as convincing as the proposal," he says.

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LOW RISK, HIGH RETURN

Azured's SD-WAN solution presented LEAP with a low risk way to move to a new, more powerful, and more predictable future. Designing and building alongside their live operations gave LEAP's 350 people the certainty that there would be no loss of service, but that when the big switchover came, performance would be greatly enhanced.

LEAP's historic system was based on expensive MPLS links from its three east coast offices, and low grade (40Mb) domestic internet to smaller remote sites across Australia. The total annual bill was more than AUD \$23,000 for a service that lacked redundancy and was frequently bottlenecked, especially when presenting demos using onpremise equipment.

Using Azured's Network as a Service (NWaaS) SD-WAN solution, the transformation in performance was immediate and palpable. The new architecture was based on 1Gb fibre internet links to the three main sites and 100Mb links to the outlying offices, with 4G backup. The whole system is built on 'VMware SD-WAN by VeloCloud', providing predictable traffic management and industrial strength security throughout. "Azured halved the annual cost of our network connectivity and management," explains Greg, "and gave us more visibility along with much improved performance."

TAKING BACK CONTROL

One of the biggest issues for Greg and LEAP Australia was loss of control. A critical factor in the architecture and the service wrapper of the new contract is that all the control is taken out of the hands of the supplier of the underlying network connectivity. "The advantage of the SD-WAN is that we can switch from one provider to another—the service is completely agnostic—we're not stuck with any entity, we can choose and use multiple suppliers, depending on the price and performance on offer."

LEAP has access to the VeloCloud SD-WAN orchestrator, with real-time monitoring and reporting on network performance, giving them unprecedented control over their traffic. LEAP's technical team also has a lot less to worry about, and a single point of contact at Azured to manage the supply of all its network services and connectivity.

"I think big telcos offer a lot of comfort for people, but they rely on your fear of moving," reflects Greg. "What they offer is not always that bad, it's just that they can be slow to adapt to changing needs, and while you keep paying, they lack an incentive to come to you with ideas that could help you and keep you as a customer."

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Greg Horner, MD of LEAP Australia.

Want to learn more?

To learn more about what Azured and NWaaS can do for your business, contact us on (03) 9525 9031 or at info@azured.com.au

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