



Success story - IP VPN

In-depth

Getting the best out of the network

High Street retailer Ryman Ltd has been making use of Entanet's next-generation network to deliver data and voice connectivity to its entire network of stores throughout the UK - and to provide fast and cost-effective expansion capabilities for its rapidly expanding Boux Avenue operation.

Ryman (www.ryman.co.uk) is a well-known name in the High Street. The company has 237 stores throughout the UK, each of which provides a convenient and professional source of stationery supplies. Ryman prides itself on delivering the best possible customer experience and this approach has earned the company a reputation for service and quality that is second to none. The company needs fast, reliable and dependable data communications between its stores, its head office in Crewe and the company's data centre in West Drayton. It had previously run separate networks for its corporate operations and the retail outlets and when the plans for the launch of Boux Avenue, which is a quite separate company within the group, were put forward, that meant a third and quite distinct network would need to be set-up.

The core networks support business-critical applications and all the traffic for Ryman's point-of-sale terminals, so reliable and resilient connectivity is absolutely vital. They also provide a vehicle for email connectivity and for the company's Intranet. Business continuity, PCI compliance and efficient telephony services are also essential services run across the network.

For a number of years, Ryman had made use of BT's private network circuits to provide connectivity between its sites. When BT rolled out 21CN across the UK, it changed the structure and pricing of these services. While this would deliver more performance and available bandwidth, it was also going to mean a significant increase in costs for the stationer.

Jeremy Fiddler, Head of Group IT at Ryman Stationery, decided it was time to look at alternatives and ultimately chose one that was based on Entanet's infrastructure. "We'd been running on an older BT network and when we needed to move up to the 21CN the cost just looked prohibitive, so we decided to see what the market had to offer. The Entanet-based service was the only one that met all of our needs in terms of the flexibility and cost."

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*Jeremy Fiddler,
Head of Group IT, Ryman Ltd*

Utilising Entanet's national Next Generation Network

As Entanet's service is based on WBC (Wholesale Broadband Connect), the platform for delivering broadband connections on 21CN, Fiddler was able to secure large amounts of bandwidth at a price more attractive than other providers who used managed networks could offer. The nationwide availability of WBC also meant that Ryman would be able to provide full ADSL2+ connections for stores in all areas where 21CN was available, while providing up



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to 8Mbps broadband for some of the smaller locations for which fast bandwidth delivery was less important.

Flexibility and scalability were also important to Ryman as it needed decent capacity for both its corporate network and for the network that links all of its stores across the UK. It wanted to build in redundancy for connections and further potential for expansion too.

The solutions Fiddler implemented met all these requirements. "Entanet provided us with a 1Gbps bearer even though we were only going to be using around 200Mbps initially. That gave us a lot of flexibility which turned out to be invaluable when we learned that we were going to be launching a new lingerie business, Boux Avenue. The original solution allowed us to maximise the use of the Ethernet circuits at our data centre and HQ locations by using a single link to provide connectivity for two separate networks. When the Boux Avenue network was developed, we were simply able to add it to the data centre 1Gbps link, and use the 100Mbps bearer at a London corporate site to provide access to that location."

Fiddler was able to do this without major additional investment in communications services. He simply took up a further 10Mbps of the available bandwidth to provide the connectivity needed to support the six Boux Avenue stores that had been opened by April 2011. This business has since been developed, growing to eight outlets at the end of 2011, with plans to double the number in 2012.

As this operation has expanded, Fiddler has been able to provide the additional capacity needed to support its separate operations quite easily, adding two ADSL lines at each store to provide both data and VoIP connectivity to the outlets - and failover should one of the broadband lines go down for any reason.

Ultimately, Ryman's implemented solution comprised ADSL and ADSL2+ connections across the 237 High Street stores and an EFM (Ethernet in the First Mile) circuit to a key London store, a 100Mbps Ethernet circuit to its Crewe HQ that doubles as the stores' disaster recovery site, and a 1Gbps Ethernet circuit to its data centre, with SDSL backup. Furthermore, as the business wanted to capitalise on the efficiency and savings afforded by IP voice, two VoIP media gateways were established to Entanet's voice platform.

The flexibility for growth

Fiddler said: "The solution Entanet helped us implement has given us exactly the sort of flexibility we were looking for and the scalability afforded by Entanet's network proved invaluable when we learned we needed to add the Boux Avenue business to the infrastructure. We now have three or four times more capacity and failover, which gives us a great deal of confidence for future growth." Entanet's reliable network has really proved its worth with respect to the growth and development of the Boux Avenue outlets. As well as providing

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a solid base for data and voice traffic here, the network is also carrying rich content that includes high-definition video and audio material for the digital signage solutions that the company has deployed in all of the lingerie stores. This enables advertising and marketing messages about new lines and special offers and promotions to be pushed out to all the stores at the same time in a consistent manner.

The bandwidth flexibility and scalability that Entanet has been able to provide and the consistent quality of the connections has made it easy to deploy new stores. All they need in terms of connectivity are two simple broadband lines, which Entanet, with its nationwide coverage, can easily provide. Also, as Entanet has massive capacity on its network, it can provide downstream speeds of up to 20Mbps on these lines in many areas.

As well as providing a more robust connectivity for Ryman's national operations, Entanet has been able to help Ryman build an infrastructure that gives the business much more protection and keeps Ryman's costs down as well.

Complete peace of mind

Fiddler says: "The main benefit has been the reliability and resilience of the connections. We had a single point of failure before and limited bandwidth. We don't have any of those issues now. We have resiliency built into the network and we've got as much bandwidth as we need to support the data, voice and video applications that we need to run."

"The WAN also means that we can have a proper business continuity plan, as we are able to run multiple data centres and connect them at 100Mbps across the network. We've got a second data centre now in Crewe that is just 10 minutes behind the main one and we can do it all across the same network, with more resilience. We had to have two completely separate networks before so that's meant reduced costs overall."

While it has not done a direct cost-savings calculation, Fiddler estimates that Ryman has saved about 25 percent on communications costs overall.

Being able to expand its network at any time and with relatively small outlay means that Ryman can press ahead with its plans to make its stores more efficient and continue with its expansion plans for the Boux Avenue outlets without worrying about if or how it can meet the connectivity needs of new stores. The Entanet network has provided Ryman with a reliable platform for business growth.

