

UTILIZING VISUALIZATION TO SHAPE TRAFFIC ON THE NETWORK



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CUSTOMER NAME: Air Methods

INDUSTRY: Air Medical Transport

LOCATIONS: 300 bases over 48 U.S. states
(HQ: Colorado, USA)

EMPLOYEES: 4,000+

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- Lacked Quality of Service (QoS) during their network expansion, which required more bandwidth than their current hardware could support
- Acquired minimal visibility into their network routes and flows; they could not see how QoS shaped traffic

SOLUTION

- Deployed LiveAction's solution, LiveNX*, to improve Quality of Service (QoS) capabilities and utilized its unique topology to gain full visibility into network routes and flows

BUSINESS RESULTS

- No longer needed to invest and overspend in larger, more costly network and QoS control appliances
- Optimized productivity and communications—now with the ability to support critical radio-over-IP used for live communications from aircraft to the remote bases
- Improved application performance—the network is able to accommodate new applications and changes in the traffic mix as the company grows

CUSTOMER CHALLENGE

Each year Air Methods Corporation transports more than 98,000 patients who require intensive medical care either from accident scenes or from general care hospitals to highly skilled trauma centers or tertiary care centers. To handle the urgency and volume of these critical missions, the Englewood, Colorado-based company operates a fleet of 300 helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft at 300 bases in 48 states.

While Air Methods is dedicated exclusively to the field of air medical transport, its product and service offerings extend well beyond the actual airlifts. The company also designs and manufactures medical aircraft equipment and interiors, provides a complete medical air and ground transport billing solution for providers, and maintains a nationwide medical communications network.

The communications network supports key offices in five different locations plus 300 remote bases that access the network via VPN. Each of the five main offices provides a specialized operational function:

- Colorado—corporate headquarters
- California—billing center
- Omaha—dispatch
- St. Louis—dispatch
- Pennsylvania—helicopter maintenance

Supporting the network from Air Methods' Colorado headquarters is senior network engineer, Xavier Chaparro—the sole networking engineer among a 20-person IT department. He provides support for all network applications and, along with a radio engineer, also provides support for critical radio-over-IP used for live communications from aircraft to the remote bases.

Challenges for Chaparro and the team began to occur during a network expansion. In the past, Chaparro used WAN optimization appliances to shape traffic across an MPLS network. However when a network expansion required considerably more bandwidth than the hardware could support, Chaparro opted to use the Quality of Service (QoS) functionality already included with his Cisco routers rather than reinvesting in larger, more costly appliances.

SOLUTION

After downloading a free trial and attending a live demonstration presented by the LiveAction sales team, Chaparro decided to move ahead and purchase the LiveAction software solution (now known as LiveNX*), to help manage Cisco QoS on the Air Methods network.

Although he was comfortable with his own ability to manage Cisco routers using the traditional command-line interface (CLI), when Chaparro saw a demonstration of how LiveAction could be used to manage Cisco QoS, he immediately realized the power and convenience the product had to offer.

UTILIZING VISUALIZATION TO SHAPE TRAFFIC ON THE NETWORK

“I primarily liked the way it provided visualization for QoS, so I could actually see how it shaped the traffic passing through each interface,” Chaparro said. “I also like being able to change my QoS policies on the fly with LiveAction. It’s a lot better than using the CLI because I can actually see and verify the changes I’m implementing.”

He stated that while you still have to know and understand what you are doing, LiveAction makes the job of managing Cisco networks much easier. “Configuring QoS with command-lines is very cumbersome and it’s easy to make a mistake and not realize it. LiveAction simplifies the process for creating and implementing policies and it also prevents errors.”

CUSTOMER RESULTS

When Chaparro started the project, he knew the network was already in good condition, so transitioning from the WAN optimizer hardware to LiveAction software went very smoothly. With the help of LiveAction he uses Cisco’s QoS function to classify his network traffic and applications. Previously he relied on the WAN appliances to filter individual applications. Today as the company grows and evolves, the Air Methods network also adapts to these changes on a regular basis. Every few weeks, Chaparro uses LiveAction to adjust the networking environment to accommodate new applications and changes to the traffic mix.

ABOUT LIVEACTION

LiveAction provides comprehensive and robust solutions for Network Performance Management. Key capabilities include Cisco Intelligent WAN visualization and service assurance, best-practice QoS policy management, and application-aware network performance management. LiveAction software’s rich GUI and visualization provide IT teams with a deep understanding of the network while simplifying and accelerating management and troubleshooting tasks.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

LiveNX and LiveUX Downloads

Free downloads of [LiveNX](#) and [LiveUX](#) are available now. Visit our webpage to discover more details and benefits of LiveNX and LiveUX.

Upcoming Webinars

Check out our updated [webinar schedule](#)—gain insights from our special presenters about topics like QoS, Hybrid WAN Management, Capacity Planning and more.

Additional Resources

Case studies, white papers, eBooks and more are available for your learning on the [LiveAction resources page](#).

Note: This customer story is based on information provided by Air Methods and describes how that particular organization benefits from the deployment of LiveAction solutions. Many factors may have contributed to the results and benefits described.

©2016 LiveAction, Inc. All rights reserved. LiveAction, the LiveAction logo and LiveNX Software are trademarks of LiveAction. Other company and product names are the trademarks of their respective companies.

*Product Disclaimer: LiveAction has renamed their software solution, formerly known as “LiveAction” to “LiveNX.” From 2016 and on, LiveNX will remain the official name for the software solution.