

Delivering High WAN Availability

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>Manipal Education and Medical Group (MEMG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and Healthcare
<p>BUSINESS CHALLENGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of skills, products and tools to monitor and manage the WAN Lack of ability to manage network configurations proactively Working with multiple vendors and ISPs was turning out to be a huge headache
<p>NETWORK SOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive, remote monitoring of infrastructure Managing ISPs to ensure adherence to SLAs Providing onsite support Managing Cisco equipment through Uptime powered by Cisco Services
<p>BUSINESS RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High availability of WAN, as Datacraft's NOC team proactively ensures that failures are averted in time Process driven approach to call management, problem resolution and escalation MEMG's team can now get a single view of WAN and incident statistics, WAN asset inventory and management through a portal The pain of having to deal with several vendors and ISPs, and enforcing SLAs with them has come down significantly, as Datacraft manages the entire coordination. With this intervention, MEMG now sees much improved adherence to SLAs by all vendors and service providers Datacraft has a team of experienced Cisco-Certified Engineers looking after the MEMG network, and are thus able to deliver better configuration management on Cisco equipment deployed

Manipal Education and Medical Group (MEMG) opts for a managed service contract with Datacraft, driven by 'Uptime powered by Cisco Services'; and sees huge improvements in network and IT infrastructure uptime.

Executive Background

Manipal Education and Medical Group faced major issues on its WAN that resulted in downtime and improper functioning of applications. That's when the group decided to opt for a managed services solution.

Company Background

Manipal Education and Medical Group (MEMG) is one of Asia's largest healthcare management groups. It is committed to three interwoven purposes: dissipating knowledge, applying knowledge and creating knowledge.

To this end, the group has been an innovator in the field of education, medicine and research. It is a leader in delivering global standards of excellence in education. It has also established a Stem Cell Research Centre. There are five group companies in MEMG. These are Manipal University, Sikkim Manipal University, Manipal Cure & Care, Manipal Health, and Manipal Universal Learning.

Business Challenge

MEMG has presence in 40 locations across India. One of the major challenges that MEMG faced was the downtime of its Wide Area Network (WAN), and this led to improper functioning of the applications. The group had various tier 2 and tier 3 service providers and was finding it difficult to handle them. They were also unable to provide proactive support and services which impacted the daily operations. There were delays in provisioning and non-compliance to Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

Further, the group did not have integrated monitoring or management of its systems. So there was no single view of the performance of the links and devices on the WAN either.

MEMG wanted a service provider who could manage the coordination with various vendors and Internet Service Providers (ISPs). The group currently is on the MPLS network of BSNL which connects its 40 locations across India.

"We did not have the internal strength to monitor, manage and maintain our WAN in terms of people, skills, products and tools and were looking for a provider who could help us to sort these issues with ease," says Balakrishna Rao, CIO, Manipal Universal Learning.

MEMG wanted a service provider who could manage the coordination with various vendors and Internet Service Providers (ISPs). The group currently is on the MPLS network of BSNL which connects its 40 locations across India.

MEMG wanted a service provider who could constantly assess and review the health of the network and its resources, address security issues, suggest best practices, and bring in optimisation measures and improvements from time to time. The group was looking at a nation-wide partnership with a service provider. After a process of evaluation, MEMG chose Cisco's Gold Premium Partner, Datacraft, as its managed service provider. The selection was based on the skills and capabilities to manage big projects. The presence of a full-fledged Network Operation Centre (NOC) with integrated tools and products for remote monitoring/management also was a key reason for Datacraft's selection.

Solution

MEMG signed a three-year multisourcing contract with Datacraft to manage the WAN infrastructure comprising MPLS links, Cisco routers and firewalls for its five group companies across 40 locations.

Proactive, remote monitoring of infrastructure

Datacraft monitors and analyses the various devices that are connected to the MEMG network (both education and hospital) through the NOC in Bangalore. The support centre is proactive and can identify if a link or router is about to collapse. The support team can then take preventive measures to ensure that there is no downtime.

Managing ISPs to ensure adherence to SLAs

If one of the 40 locations where MEMG is operational gets disconnected from the network, as this happens, the global support centre swings into action and raises a ticket to BSNL. Support personnel from Datacraft and BSNL visit the site where the fault has occurred and analyse the reason for the connection failure. This could be because of various issues like cable failure, modem not working, etc. Datacraft works in sync with BSNL to fix the issue as per the SLAs.

Providing onsite support

Datacraft has also deployed IT personnel within the Manipal premises, who look after IT issues such as upgrading applications, installation of programs, etc. There is a process-based approach to call management and problem resolution, complete with escalation.

Managing Cisco equipment

Datacraft also manages the various Cisco devices connected to the network of Manipal as MEMG has signed up for the 'Uptime powered by Cisco' support service, which ensures quick problem resolution and replacement of faulty equipment. 'Uptime powered by Cisco' ensures that Cisco works together with Datacraft to provide MEMG world class support. In case of critical situations MEMG has the option to involve Cisco. MEMG also gets access to Cisco's technical resources. This service also has tight SLAs that ensure speedy resolution and restoration at MEMG.

According to Narayanan, Datacraft also helps the company in providing value added services. It maintains and monitors the various routers and switches and provides HUL an uptime guarantee on the hardware.

Business Value

With Datacraft now managing the network and IT services for MEMG, the group has in place an excellent process for change management, incident management, reporting and reviews. Datacraft and Cisco have provided a portal which gives a dashboard view of how the infrastructure is performing at any given point in time.

Datacraft has helped the group in providing technology solutions that ensure high availability of the network infrastructure. Datacraft also acts as a consultant for the group by providing insights on various available technologies and solutions that could be adopted to enable the growth of the group.

Rao informs that MEMG is already engaged with a couple of other end-to-end solution projects with Datacraft. "We want to grow on the IT maturity curve and adopt new solutions and technologies to keep our operations efficient and agile," he says.

"Datacraft is the first tier1 partner in India and APAC to work with Cisco on our Smart Connected communities and we at Cisco are keen to capitalise on the knowledge and experience that Datacraft provides."

— **GB Kumar, Senior Vice President, Customer Advocacy, Cisco India & SAARC**

"Datacraft has been truly professional in the managed services space with a process driven approach and a fully integrated system for network monitoring and management."

— **Balakrishna Rao, CIO, Manipal Universal Learning**