

Wilbur-Ellis Thrives with Centralized IT Management

vCom helped this family-owned holding company centralize and standardize their IT environment, leading to lower costs, improved connections, reduced downtime, and improved support to their customers.



BACKGROUND

Founded in 1921, Wilbur-Ellis is a \$3 billion holding company with more than 250 locations. With successful divisions in agribusiness, specialty chemicals, and animal nutrition, Wilbur-Ellis has expanded by providing the essentials for the world to thrive.

“vCom is a great resource, helping us service and source products, cutting costs, and improving our ability to deliver.”

JAMESON WICK
WILBUR-ELLIS,
SENIOR MANAGER FOR
ENTERPRISE SUPPORT

CHALLENGES

As Wilbur-Ellis has expanded, its ability to operate as a single, unified entity has suffered. Many of their locations came through acquisition and continued to operate their IT autonomously with no way for the central organization to see where, what, and how much they were spending.

“Every branch felt like they were their own individual business,” says Jameson Wick, Wilbur-Ellis’ Senior Manager for Enterprise Support. “They were empowered to do their own thing, so a lot of policies and processes and structure were at branch level.” The consequences of 250 offices “doing their own thing” was severe. Branches sourced and managed their IT and telecom themselves or via local vendors, making it extremely difficult to track assets or prevent service interruptions. “There was a great lack of visibility into the types of services and spend that we had. They couldn’t provide me data on where we were spending on what,” continues Wick. With little or no knowledge of what was in use at any branch, the IT service desk was unable to support issues effectively. Invoices from dozens of disparate providers were scattered far and wide, sent to different employees at various locations. Non-payment shutoffs or late payments fees were common. Furthermore, one person was spending more than 20 hours each month just allocating bills for payment.



IT Under Management

- 35 circuits
- 2410 mobile devices

Challenges

- IT silos at 250 locations
- No centralized visibility into services or spend
- Non-payment shut offs and late fees were common

Impact

- Total savings: \$367,981
- 78% decrease in cost per MB (\$11.43 to \$4.10)
- A single support team with reduced downtime and improved customer satisfaction

SOLUTION

Wick and his team of six took on the challenge of consolidating the IT and telecom spend at each of these branches and adding governance around management of the the company's IT assets. "As a manager, being able to see how much each one of my branches was spending is the area I wanted to improve," says Wick.

Wick's team embarked on a massive transformation to persuade branch principals to let his team take over day-to-day management of their IT. The goal was to rebrand IT as a value source rather than just a reactive environment putting out fires. They began by standardizing and centralizing smaller locations to build a scalable model for larger divisions. Relying heavily on the centralized vManager platform was key. "Having the tool in a place gave us a goal," says Wick. vManager "showed us what we didn't know. Without seeing it all, we probably wouldn't have been able to make the right decisions. It was important to have a tool as a home for this information."

Recognizing the internal bandwidth of his team, Wick worked with vCom as a true partner, allowing the internal group to focus on strategic execution while vCom handles the tactical issues. "We look at you guys as an extension of our group, giving us advice, recommendations, and constant communication and feedback," says Wick.

The standardization and centralization of the IT/telecom environment at Wilbur-Ellis has allowed them to build a better governance model to support the business: standardizing technology, reducing costs—in some cases by 90%—and increasing bandwidth with minimal or no increase in cost.

RESULTS

Within 24 months, the team succeeded in bringing more than 100 branches into a centralized environment, with more coming live each week. The results of having full visibility into each environment enabled tremendous cost reductions by renegotiating contracts, standardizing equipment and services, and eliminating the unnecessary:

- ✓ ISP Upgrades: \$15,236
- ✓ Telephone: \$219,250
- ✓ Savings from cancellations: \$133,495
- ✓ 78% decrease in cost per MB (\$11.43 to \$4.10)
- ✓ 153% total download speed increase
- ✓ 234% total upload speed increase

Where technologies, costs, and support were previously spread across regions and branches, Wilbur-Ellis has been able to increase network speeds, significantly lower costs, reduce downtime, and improve customer support.

