

## IN BRIEF

### Industry

- » Retail

### Challenge

- » Processing orders was taking too long resulting in reduced employee productivity

### Solution

- » 27 Riverbed Steelhead appliances
- » Riverbed Central Management Console

### Benefits

- » Orders can now be processed in seconds rather than minutes
- » Avoided bandwidth upgrade costs estimated at €58,000 (\$82,000) per year
- » Over 50% reduction in bandwidth utilization



## AKI

### Riverbed® Steelhead® Appliances Reduce Order Processing Time and Improve Employee Productivity for Retail Company

#### Challenge: Reduce time taken to process orders via the intranet and improve employee productivity

AKI Portugal wanted to reduce the time taken to process orders and improve employee productivity for its store based users. The company relies upon Microsoft SharePoint for file sharing and order processing, and employees access those documents via the company intranet. Users were complaining that they would spend an inordinate amount of time trying to log into the intranet, only to then spend yet more time waiting to access orders and other documents. As large numbers of orders are transferred each day, business critical processes were being hampered and this was adversely affecting employee performance. To overcome the issue of poor application performance employees would resort to sending orders via email, resulting in increased activity over the wide area network (WAN).

The company's employees access the intranet via the WAN and as Rúben Salgueiro, IT manager at AKI Portugal explains, "We have a 2Mbps xDSL link to connect the store locations to the data centre, and in order to improve application performance we looked at increasing our bandwidth capacity. We did consider upgrading to a 4Mbps line but this would have increased our costs by almost €58,000 (\$84,000) per year. This additional expense was unacceptable to AKI, so we had to find an alternative solution." Salgueiro was also aware that upgrading bandwidth would not have completely resolved the issue due to file latency associated with windows file sharing applications.

AKI Portugal mainly relies upon Microsoft SharePoint, Exchange 2007 and a bespoke stock control system based on an AS 400 enterprise resource planning (ERP) system and a Cisco VoIP system.

#### Solution: Riverbed outperforms against the competition and eliminates the need for additional bandwidth

AKI Portugal decided to evaluate WAN optimization and tested products from Cisco and Riverbed. AKI Portugal ran a small pilot between two stores and the data centre, and as Salgueiro recalls, "The configuration process for Cisco was complicated and overall the results were disappointing, which was surprising considering we already use Cisco routers and switches."

**We really needed a solution that would be quick and easy to install.**

He continues, "We really needed a solution that would be quick and easy to install because we wanted as little disruption to the company's operations as possible. In contrast the Riverbed results were impressive. It was easier to install, and the Riverbed pilot provided me with access to data reduction and bandwidth utilization statistics. In addition to those benefits it was also the cheaper option."

#### Benefits: 52% reduction in bandwidth utilization, key applications accelerated and employee productivity improved

AKI Portugal has now installed 27 Riverbed Steelhead appliances in its data centre, warehouse and across its stores in Portugal. AKI Portugal has also installed the CMC which is remotely managed by its IT partner and provides the ability to deploy, configure and manage the

**The deployment was extremely straight-forward with no disruption to our employees.**

Since deploying Riverbed AKI Portugal has experienced a 52% reduction in bandwidth utilization. Employees can now gain quick access to SharePoint via the intranet and can download and place orders in a matter of seconds rather than minutes. Stores now have much quicker access to information, and productivity has increased as a result. "Before using Riverbed, our store staff were complaining a lot about how hard it was to gain access to the intranet and how slow file transfer was. Now, those complaints are rare and my team can concentrate on other projects instead of dealing with irate employees," says Salgueiro.

#### Looking Ahead

AKI Portugal plans to open around four new stores per year and has been so pleased with the Riverbed solution that the company intends to equip each new store with a Steelhead appliance. In addition AKI Portugal has more plans for using Riverbed as Salgueiro explains, "We're going to use Riverbed to optimize our disaster recovery processes and we want to test the Riverbed Mobile solution as well." AKI Portugal has a team of 60 mobile workers, and the Riverbed Steelhead Mobile solution will provide mobile workers with the same LAN-like access to files and applications as store based employees.

#### Background

AKI Portugal ([www.aki.pt](http://www.aki.pt)) was the first major DIY retailer in Portugal and has 25 stores across the country. AKI Portugal is part of the French group Adeo ([www.groupe-adeo.com](http://www.groupe-adeo.com)) which operates in 9 countries across the globe with more than 840 stores, 20 brand companies and 57,000 employees. Each store stocks thousands of items including; furniture, tools, lighting, electrical appliances, air conditioning systems and energy-saving products. AKI Portugal has almost 1500 employees working at its data centre, warehouse and stores across Portugal.

#### SUMMARY

Employees at AKI Portugal were struggling to process orders over the intranet resulting in reduced employee productivity. AKI Portugal relies upon a 2Mbps xDSL connection between its data centre and 25 stores across Portugal. Upgrading the xDSL connection was an expensive option that the company was keen to avoid, but also would not have overcome the issue of file latency.

AKI Portugal has now installed Riverbed Steelhead appliances at its data centre, warehouse and all of its stores across Portugal. Orders can now be processed at LAN-like speeds and employee productivity has been dramatically improved.

Steelhead appliances from a central location. "The deployment was extremely straight-forward with no disruption to our employees," says Salgueiro, "and the Steelhead appliances are easy to use."

**Before using Riverbed, our store staff were complaining a lot about how hard it was to gain access to the intranet and how slow file transfer was. Now, those complaints are rare.**

#### About Riverbed

Riverbed Technology is the IT infrastructure performance company. The Riverbed family of wide area network (WAN) optimization solutions liberates businesses from common IT constraints by increasing application performance, enabling consolidation, and providing enterprise-wide network and application visibility – all while eliminating the need to increase bandwidth, storage or servers. Thousands of companies with distributed operations use Riverbed to make their IT infrastructure faster, less expensive and more responsive. Additional information about Riverbed (NASDAQ: RVBD) is available at [www.riverbed.com](http://www.riverbed.com)



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