

IN BRIEF

Industry

- » Retail (Consumer Goods)

Challenges

- » Accelerate application performance for a globally distributed workforce
- » Ease the transition to centrally-deployed applications
- » Make WAN-based backup more effective

Solution

- » 37 Steelhead appliances deployed across North America and Asia
- » 60+ installations planned across Europe and South Asia

Benefits

- » 20x to 40x application performance increases
- » WAN backup windows cut from 16 to just 6 hours
- » Bandwidth use cut by over 80%

LIZ CLAIBORNE INC



Liz Claiborne

Riverbed® Steelhead® Appliances Deployed by a Global Retailer to Improve Employee Productivity, Centralize Applications, and Ease WAN-based Backup

Liz Claiborne Inc. designs and markets an extensive range of branded women’s and men’s apparel, accessories and fragrance products. The company has a diverse portfolio of quality brands that are available domestically and internationally via wholesale and retail channels. Popular globally-known brands in the Liz Claiborne portfolio include DKNY, Kenneth Cole NY, Kate Spade, Mexx, and Monet. The more than 40 brands in the Liz Claiborne Inc. portfolio are available at over 30,000 points of sale worldwide.

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accommodate that growth and integrate worldwide business operations, the company sought to deploy both custom applications designed for the global retail business and improve response times of existing applications such as their ERP application, and Microsoft Office, Exchange 2003, CommVault backup and SharePoint, over the wide area network (WAN).

Challenge: Enabling Employees To Be Productive, Wherever They Are

Liz Claiborne is in a period of immense change. As recently noted to the financial community in its earnings announcements, Claiborne is “committed to strategic acquisitions as part of our growth strategy.” Yet, an aggressive growth strategy presents challenges for maintaining a high level of worker productivity.

“Our organization is very much a distributed organization. We have sales, finance, operations, and marketing professionals all over the world. With our successful growth strategy in place, it’s critical that all our employees – no matter where they are – can access the key files and applications they need to get their jobs done,” noted Gary Williams, Director of End User Computing. “We started to notice performance issues due to chattier applications and larger data, both domestically and internationally. It would take many, many minutes to simply access a 1 Megabyte or larger financial spreadsheet or other standard office document.”

Rakesh Patel, Technical Architect, continued, “In addition, we were seeing potential performance issues crop up across many of our important applications, not just files. SharePoint document management, Exchange email, CommVault backup, ERP, and finance applications all were not performing up to our expectations over the WAN. And given that strategically we wanted to move to more centralized applications, we knew we needed to address these WAN application performance issues.”

Liz Claiborne (www.lizclaiborneinc.com) has locations across the globe, including distribution centers, and management, sales, finance, and operations offices. Sites are located in North America, Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, India, China and Southeast Asia. The business is expanding in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia due to both acquisition and natural growth. To

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Liz Claiborne maintains a central data center in North Bergen, New Jersey, and regional hubs in New York City, Santa Fe Springs, California, Hong Kong and Amsterdam. Some applications, such as the company's ERP and finance applications, are centralized, while others, including email and backup, are located in regional hubs. The Liz Claiborne network could see latency as high as 350 - 400 milliseconds from New York to Hong Kong, or just 3 - 5 milliseconds between New York City and nearby North Bergen, New Jersey, generally with T1 or less bandwidth capacity to branch offices. With this wide range of conditions, Liz Claiborne faced a big challenge in improving performance for all of their users.

Solution: Steelhead Appliances Overcome Network Limitations

Williams and Patel, with their colleague Bob Czukkermann started testing WAN optimization as a solution to these performance problems. Czukkermann, supervisor of server infrastructure, noted,

“When you deploy the Steelhead appliance, our workers can do their jobs faster. You don't need a spreadsheet to see how good Riverbed's product is for the organization.”

“It was important to find a product that would provide great performance, and would integrate well into our global Cisco network.”

“We did extensive evaluation of solutions from Riverbed, Cisco Systems and Tacit Networks (acquired by Packeteer),” continued Czukkermann. “We chose Riverbed over the competition. The Steelhead appliance was able to optimize all of our important applications and delivered the best performance over our global

Cisco network. It was also the easiest to deploy and manage.

Patel commented, “Cisco and Tacit offered solutions that were WAFS-only caching products. While accelerating file transfers is important, our needs were much broader than that. By using the Riverbed solution we can accelerate not only files, but also our ERP applications, finance applications, email, and even WAN backup tools.”

Czukkermann added, “Riverbed was also easy to deploy. It now takes us less than 10 minutes to get a site up and running with a Steelhead appliances, including time for testing. The boxes are shipped pre-configured by Riverbed. Our technical staff and a user in the remote site manage the process in a single phone call. Riverbed has made deployment to sites across the global painless.”

Benefits: Faster Applications, Easier WAN Back-up, and More Productive Users

Riverbed Steelhead appliances have enabled Liz Claiborne's employees to maintain a high level of productivity as the organization expands across the globe. Czukkermann noted, “It used to take 10 or 20 minutes to download a large file in New York from our New Jersey datacenter. Now it just takes 30 seconds.”

In addition, the team noted that its CommVault WAN-based backup windows were cut from 16 hours to just 6 hours. Patel commented, “This enables us to do more frequent, more reliable backups. We also don't need to burden local staff to do tasks like swapping tapes. It's a win-win situation for the business, the end users and the IT team alike.”

“Steelhead appliances cut WAN-based backup windows from 16 hours to just 6 hours. This enables us to do more frequent, more reliable backups.”

Patel also discussed the benefits that Steelhead appliances had on new application rollout and bandwidth utilization. “While saving bandwidth was not a primary goal of this project, it was a happy consequence. Overall, we've seen an 80% reduction in bandwidth utilization. For example, on one particular T1 connection, we're getting the throughput equivalent to 12 Mbps. That's an 8x capacity increase with no additional cost to us. That allows us to deploy our custom applications centrally and enable them to be reliably used worldwide.”

Gary Williams added, “We have a transition going on where we are shifting to applications that are more suited to our global approach. But these applications are affected by both latency and

bandwidth limitations. Without Riverbed, this transition would be painful, as centralized deployments couldn't meet the performance requirements of our users."

Return on Investment

Williams discussed return on investment and justifying the Riverbed Steelhead appliance purchase within Liz Claiborne. "There are many different benefits to this product. Faster applications, the ability to centralize applications, shorter backup windows, and even reductions in bandwidth utilization factor into the equation. Many organizations would take all that and create some kind of ROI quantification.

"But for us, the ROI justification was much easier than that. When you deploy the Steelhead appliance, our workers can do their jobs faster. If you turn the device off, the number of complaints goes up, user frustration goes back up, and productivity goes down. You don't need a spreadsheet to see how good Riverbed's product is for the organization."

Future Plans

Liz Claiborne has already deployed 37 devices across North America and Asia. Given the success of this first phase of the project, the organization is now considering a rollout of 60+ additional devices across Europe and South Asia.

SUMMARY

Currently in a period of fast growth, Liz Claiborne wanted to make sure that its global workforce was as productive as possible. Application performance over the WAN was a limiting factor across the world.

After extensive testing, Liz Claiborne decided to deploy Riverbed Steelhead appliances across its global Cisco network. The organization saw application acceleration from 20x to 40x faster, and backup windows cut from 16 to just 6 hours.

In addition, Steelhead appliances enabled high performance globally from centralized ERP and finance applications.



About Riverbed

Riverbed delivers performance for the globally connected enterprise. With Riverbed, enterprises can successfully and intelligently implement strategic initiatives such as virtualization, consolidation, cloud computing, and disaster recovery without fear of compromising performance. By giving enterprises the platform they need to understand, optimize and consolidate their IT, Riverbed helps enterprises to build a fast, fluid and dynamic IT architecture that aligns with the business needs of the organization. Additional information about Riverbed (NASDAQ: RVBD) is available at www.riverbed.com.



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