

## IN BRIEF

### Industry

- » Architecture services

### Challenge

- » Slow access to information over the WAN in the branch offices
- » Difficulty collaborating between branch offices for key projects
- » Limited access to key applications for mobile workers

### Solution

- » Nine Steelhead appliances deployed in branch offices and 30 Steelhead Mobile licenses

### Benefits

- » Enabled collaboration between branch offices, eliminating the need to hire additional staff based on workload
- » Improved productivity for mobile workers
- » Improved backup efficiency and reliability; elimination of tape backup in branches
- » Avoided \$12,000 in monthly bandwidth expenses with one-time Steelhead appliance purchase

## WARE MALCOMB

Leading Design for Commercial Real Estate



# Ware Malcomb

## Riverbed® Steelhead® Products Improve Collaboration and Productivity for Architecture Services Firm

### Overview

Ware Malcomb ([www.waremalcomb.com](http://www.waremalcomb.com)) is a national design firm that offers professional planning, architecture, interior and graphic design services to commercial development and corporate clients throughout North America. Founded in 1972, the firm has 250 employees, and was one of the first architectural firms in Orange County to specialize in the design of office and industrial buildings. Since 2000, Ware Malcomb has opened offices in Sacramento, Denver, Chicago, New Jersey, and Phoenix. Relationship building in the commercial development community has been the cornerstone of the firm's growth, both in the early years and throughout its history.

Ware Malcomb was listed as #19 among Architecture firms in Building Design & Construction's "Giants 300" ranking, published on July, 2007.

### Challenge: Improving Information Access for Branch Offices and Mobile Workers

Over the last ten years, Ware Malcomb has grown from a 60 person company with three offices to 250 employees with 11 offices. The company prides itself on providing outstanding client service, and collaboration among branch offices is a key ingredient for success. The firm uses multiple CAD platforms, including AutoCAD, ADT, Revit, MicroStation, and ADD. Accessing data with these applications had become difficult for branch offices and mobile workers.

As the firm grew, collaboration between offices became increasingly strained. "When we first started looking for an optimization solution, it was taking extremely long to access any data at the branch offices. This was a problem because we rely on sharing resources and employees between offices to complete our projects," recalled Moses Gonzales, Director of IT at Ware Malcomb. "In some instances, it could take two minutes just to browse a directory, let alone open any files."

For example, one PhotoShop file would take about five minutes to copy over the network, causing many users to call Gonzales and his staff with complaints. Given the firm's emphasis on collaboration, Ware Malcomb needed a solution. "We really wanted something that would allow us to access data quickly so we could complete projects efficiently," noted Gonzales.

Ware Malcomb also had employees working on the road. "I do a lot of work from the train and I have a wireless service card and it's always worked fine for e-mail, but VPNing into the network has always been pretty shaky, and trying to remotely manage servers was kind of hit and miss," said Gonzales.

### Solution: Steelhead Appliances and Steelhead Mobile Improve Collaboration

Once Gonzales decided to look into a WAN optimization solution, he evaluated several competitors. "When we tested Steelhead appliances, we were very happy and actually knew some colleagues at a couple of other firms who were also in the process of evaluating Riverbed and it just seemed like the best fit for us," said Gonzales.

**"About half the staff from one office were able to help another office, and that allowed us to keep those employees and to be productive, and also to cut down on our training costs. So it made a huge difference for us."**

Gonzales was also impressed with the Riverbed technical staff. "The Riverbed technical staff was very knowledgeable. The technical people at some of the other companies we talked to were not as technically adept or as helpful," remembered Gonzales.

**"We've been able to centralize our backups so we don't use the time of our branch office employees changing tapes, which boosts their productivity and also boosts the reliability."**

The in-path deployment of the Steelhead appliances went smoothly, without interrupting network operations. "We did it after hours and the connections, when we plugged the devices in, literally were up within 30 seconds or so," commented Gonzales. Deploying Steelhead Mobile also went smoothly: "Getting the Mobile Client set up was painless. We basically put the Steelhead Mobile Controller in, told the device where our Steelhead appliances were, and then after deployed the client through group policy. So that was fairly easy."

### Benefits: Improved Branch Collaboration and Mobile Worker Productivity

Deploying Riverbed Steelhead appliances and Steelhead Mobile software has significantly improved productivity at Ware Malcomb. Files are much easier to access. Once the Steelhead appliances were implemented, the PhotoShop file which used to take five minutes to copy "was immediately reduced to somewhere between 2-1/2 and three minutes; then after we did that initial copy, we tried doing it again and it went down to about 20 seconds," said Gonzales.

In addition, Ware Malcomb can now collaborate more effectively between branches, so when one office is very busy they can leverage staff from offices where business is slower. This eliminates the need to hire temporary staff in one office while reducing staff in another, which can be very expensive. "In the beginning of the year we had that same scenario," said Gonzales. "About half the staff from one office was able to help another office, and that allowed us to keep those employees and to be productive, and also to cut down on our training costs. So it made a huge difference for us."

Ware Malcomb has been able to deliver this improved collaboration without additional bandwidth. "To get that same type of flexibility, I think we would need to at least triple the bandwidth that we currently have, which would cost us approximately an additional \$12,000 a month," said Gonzales. Given what the additional bandwidth would have cost the firm, the Riverbed investment paid for itself in just over six months.

Another major area of improvement has been backups. Prior to deploying Riverbed, Ware Malcomb used tape backup in all the branch offices, which required local employees not trained in IT to check the backups and change tapes. With Riverbed Steelhead appliances, this process is significantly improved. "We've been able to centralize our backups so we don't use the time of our branch office employees to change tapes. Instead, we have our IT people check the backups; this boosts both employee productivity and the reliability of the backups," said Gonzales.

Steelhead Mobile software has also improved productivity. Employees working remotely can now access critical information, which has improved their productivity. Gonzales recalled: "Since we've implemented Steelhead Mobile ...my ability to remotely manage our network while in transit has just gotten so much more reliable and I've become so much more productive."

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Steelhead Mobile software also enabled a smooth integration with WHA Architects, a design firm in Toronto that Ware Malcomb merged with in January 2008. Gonzales remembered: "We were already using the Steelhead Mobile, and once the merger was finalized it was easy to get our new Toronto office integrated to our IT systems. Now every employee, including those in Toronto, can easily access our design files and Intranet. Steelhead Mobile made the integration between two firms seamless."

Another benefit of the Riverbed solution has been the ease of management. "There's very little management required," said Gonzales. The auto-discovery feature has also helped in this regard. "We can add applications to the network and we don't have to manage our Steelhead appliances to optimize the traffic; it just happens automatically," noted Gonzales.

Finally, users are much happier with application performance over the WAN, and the number of complaint calls has decreased. "They're a tiny fraction of what they used to be," noted Gonzales.

#### **SUMMARY**

**Ware Malcomb needed to improve collaboration between its branch offices as the firm grew, and it also needed to improve the productivity of its mobile workers.**

**After evaluating several competing products, Ware Malcomb chose the Riverbed solution to improve collaboration and productivity.**

**With Steelhead appliances and Steelhead Mobile client software, Ware Malcomb can now easily share workloads across offices. The firm has also improved its backup process, eliminating tape backup in its branch offices, and improved the productivity of mobile workers.**



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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



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