

The Sol Group



The Sol Group is using Riverbed SteelConnect SD-WAN and cloud networking solution to greatly simplify network management and improve digital performance at 40 branch offices across 23 countries.

Company description

The Sol Group is the largest independent petroleum marketing company in the Caribbean basin, with operations spanning 23 countries. The company supplies fuels, lubricants, and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) through an extensive service station network, and supplies petroleum-based products to commercial customers involved in shipping, luxury boating, aviation, mining, trucking, and fleet operations.

In Brief

Challenges

- Control cost of hybrid network connecting geographically diverse office locations
- Simplify remote IT management while assuring application performance
- Ensure all locations have fast and secure access to financial systems and other core applications

Solution

- Riverbed® SteelConnect™

Benefits

- Simplified remote IT and network management
- One-click connectivity with application-centric policies
- Fast and secure access to all applications

Many countries, governments, and technologies

The Sol Group is managed by 40 local offices supported by the corporate head office in Barbados. The local offices operate in countries where there are different governments, different regulations, and different technologies. Connecting them digitally requires a hybrid network consisting of MPLS, Internet, and cellular.

Having multiple networking options increases the management challenges for the company's IT team. It also had the potential to become much more expensive several years ago when the company decided to centralize some of its key applications. Prior to that, applications were hosted locally, making the role of the network less important. But to ensure that all branch offices would have fast and secure access to core systems once they were delivered from a data center, the company was looking at very expensive upgrades to existing circuits.

"We saw that the cost was going to be tremendous, or the centralization wasn't going to be effective," explains Earl Mayers, regional IT manager for The Sol Group. "We needed to find a networking solution that would allow us to have effective communications and reduce our total cost of ownership (TCO) on such a diverse infrastructure."

Instead, Mayers opted to go with a software-defined wide area networking (SD-WAN) approach, which offered the advantage of managing multiple types of network connections with one solution. After looking at offerings from several companies, Mayers chose Riverbed® SteelConnect™.

"We felt very strong about the ability of Riverbed to actually deliver. In addition, going with Riverbed gives us the option to scale up and integrate other Riverbed technologies," Mayers says.

"With Riverbed, we are future-proofing our plans while reducing our TCO."

Earl Mayers
Regional IT Manager, The Sol Group

Network management with SteelConnect – “simplified but not simplistic”

The main benefit of SteelConnect, according to Mayers, is the ease of network management. Not only can he monitor the network from a single pane of glass. Changes that used to take hours now take just one or two clicks, with application-centric policies that automatically get pushed to all appliances. “The ease of administration with SteelConnect and the ability to make changes—it’s simplified but it’s not simplistic. It is simple enough to understand but so powerful,” Mayers says.

The ease of management extends beyond his office, which is important because only six of the 40 remote offices have an IT specialist on site. Today, when Mayers needs to add a new location to the network, he can design first and deploy later. Using SteelConnect “shadow appliances,” The Sol Group defines performance and security policies ahead of time, then simply ships the SteelConnect to the remote site when ready. Anyone at that location can plug it in.

“It could be an accountant, a salesperson, or someone at the front desk,” Mayers notes. “Any non-technical end user can just plug the device in and it functions at once. We can access it from anywhere with an Internet connection. It’s fantastic.”

Mayers says that calls regarding connectivity problems stopped after SteelConnect was installed, and that the centralization of key applications is working well.

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With SteelConnect in place, and the ability to bring in other integrated Riverbed solutions as needed, such as SteelHead SaaS (for accelerating public cloud-based applications), and SteelCentral (for application and network performance monitoring), Mayers feels ready for the future. “Longer-term, we are going to bring other business segments into the network and leverage some of the benefits of cloud-based solutions,” he says. “With Riverbed, we are future-proofing our plans while reducing our TCO.”

About Riverbed

Riverbed®, The Digital Performance Company™, enables organizations to maximize digital performance across every aspect of their business, allowing customers to rethink possible. Riverbed's unified and integrated Digital Performance Platform™ brings together a powerful combination of Digital Experience, Cloud Networking and Cloud Edge solutions that provides a modern IT architecture for the digital enterprise, delivering new levels of operational agility and dramatically accelerating business performance and outcomes. At more than \$1 billion in annual revenue, Riverbed's 30,000+ customers include 98% of the *Fortune* 100 and 100% of the *Forbes* Global 100. Learn more at riverbed.com.

The Riverbed logo consists of the word "riverbed" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters "river" are in a dark orange color, and the letters "bed" are in a lighter orange color. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the letter "d".