

KLX



Using insight from SteelCentral, KLX created a global network that relies on SteelHead and SteelFusion appliances and SteelHead SaaS to ensure data security and good application performance worldwide.

Company description

KLX Inc. is the world's leading provider of aerospace fasteners, consumables, and logistics services as KLX Aerospace Solutions. The company also provides oilfield services and associated rental equipment across North America as KLX Energy Services.

In Brief

Challenges

- Understand software dependencies and identify performance bottlenecks in existing network in preparation for spin-off from parent company
- Ensure good application performance across a hybrid WAN
- Protect data in remote offices
- Control infrastructure costs

Solution

- Riverbed® SteelCentral™ for end-to-end application visibility
- Riverbed® SteelFusion™ for consolidating branch data and IT operations in the data center
- Riverbed® SteelHead™ for WAN optimization
- Riverbed® SteelHead™ SaaS for accelerating delivery of SaaS apps
- Riverbed® SteelScript™ for platform customization

Benefits

- 99.7% on-time deliveries
- \$1 to \$1.5 million cost avoidance
- Remote sites no longer at risk of data loss
- Centralized applications perform well worldwide



Fast global application performance is needed to meet 20-minute SLAs

KLX is the company airlines call when they've got a plane full of people sitting on the tarmac, unable to take off until a replacement part arrives. With 110 global facilities (including 55 forward stock warehouses) and nearly 4,000 employees, KLX can deliver a replacement part in as little as 20 minutes.

"We have very short service level agreements (SLAs), anywhere from four hours to 20 minutes," explains Jack Ortman, Managing Director, Infrastructure at KLX. "We have a whole program called AOG (aircraft on the ground) to respond as quickly as possible when an aircraft that should be flying is grounded because of parts."

Properly managing an inventory of 800,000 distinct SKUs is critical to meeting the short SLAs. "It's a question of having the inventory, number one, and then also properly managing it so parts are near where they're going to be used," says Ortman. KLX uses the Kardex logistics system for this. Kardex is so important to KLX that Ortman calls it "the lifeblood of our business."

Kardex is centralized in a US database and accessed over the WAN. Ortman worked with Riverbed partner, Tier3 Technologies, to create—from scratch—a global IT infrastructure that ensures good application performance over a WAN, even at KLX offices in remote areas of Australia, China and South Africa.

"When we were spun off from B/E Aerospace, we had a unique opportunity, a green-field environment where we could select the best technologies," Ortman says. "Given the long distances and latencies we deal with, we knew one of those technologies would be WAN optimization. And not just for Kardex. We have a number of key business systems that are delivered over a network and whose performance is critical, including some of our financial systems, email, and Office 365."

Ensuring data security was another consideration of Ortman's as he set up the new infrastructure. "Some of our customers are in the defense industry, and there are specific compliance requirements we must meet. And some of our offices are in areas that are risky for one reason or other. We take data security and protection very seriously," he notes.

Finally, Ortman had to keep an eye on costs. "Certainly as we separated from our former parent company, we wanted to make sure our costs to operate the environment ourselves were going to be less than what we were paying them to do it before," he adds.

"Riverbed is one of those technologies that improves the performance of your systems while reducing your total costs."

Jack Ortman
Managing Director, Infrastructure at KLX

Riverbed solutions help achieve 99.7% on-time deliveries

Tier3 began working with KLX prior to the spin-off, helping Ortman and his team plan their new network. Insight provided by Riverbed® SteelCentral™ performance monitoring solutions, such as AppResponse, NetProfiler, NetShark and customized SteelScript™ Open APIs, played an important role here.

“There were lots of embedded systems in place and lots of dependencies that nobody really understood because they had just grown over years,” explains Michael Paynter, founder and CEO of Tier3. “Using SteelCentral, we were able help KLX understand how users from all over the world were accessing the applications and what the dependencies were. And more importantly, what might be causing performance problems.”

To eliminate those problems and ensure better application performance than what the parent company had, Tier3 deployed Riverbed solutions throughout KLX—SteelHead™ appliances in the company’s data centers to optimize application performance across wide area networks (WANs), SteelFusion™ Edge appliances at the remote sites to centralize branch IT in the data center, and SteelHead SaaS to accelerate the company’s cloud-based apps. (In addition to Office 365, KLX uses SAP SuccessFactors for HR, SAP Concur for travel expense management, Ceridian DayForce for payroll, and ServiceNow for IT service management.) Tier3 provides Riverbed solutions as a managed service for KLX.

Tier3 chose SteelFusion, a converged Riverbed solution for the edge, because in addition to providing the WAN acceleration needed for strong application performance, the appliances also help ensure data security by centralizing 100% of company data in the data center.

“We have a lot of files that are shared across different functional areas. SteelFusion allows for those files to be projected to the edge so the users get the performance as if they were using local files, but there’s no risk of that data being lost,” Ortman notes.

In terms of meeting SLAs, the network that Ortman and Tier3 put together has been a definite success. “Today, 99.7% of our orders are delivered on-time to customers’ specifications,” Ortman says. “And obviously, that continues to ratchet up as we continue to make process improvements.”

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In terms of costs, Ortman is equally pleased. “Riverbed is one of those technologies that improves the performance of your systems while reducing your total costs,” he says. “As we expand over the coming year, we expect we’ll have a cost avoidance of \$1 to \$1.5 million dollars that we would have otherwise have incurred upgrading those distant WAN connections around the world.”

About Riverbed

Riverbed Technology, Inc. enables organizations to modernize their networks and applications with industry-leading SD-WAN, application acceleration, and visibility solutions. Riverbed's platform allows enterprises to transform application and cloud performance into a competitive advantage by maximizing employee productivity and leveraging IT to create new forms of operational agility. At more than \$1 billion in annual revenue, Riverbed's 28,000+ customers include 97% of the *Fortune* 100 and 98% of the *Forbes* Global 100. Learn more at riverbed.com.

The Riverbed logo consists of the word "riverbed" in a lowercase, bold, orange sans-serif font.