

Blach Construction



Riverbed SteelFusion Helps Blach Construction Provide Cost-Competitive, Technologically Advanced Construction Services to Its Clients

With offices in Silicon Valley and the Central Coast, Blach Construction is a mid-sized general contractor and construction manager specializing in the construction and renovation of office spaces, schools, medical office buildings and a broad range of public use projects.

Established in Santa Clara in 1970, Blach and its teams (approximately 185 employees) are committed to building structures of enduring quality and sustainability that enhance the community. Projects include the restoration of the Carmel Mission Basilica, new LEED Platinum headquarters of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Santa Clara University's McLaughlin-Walsh Residence Halls and a new \$40 million south campus complex for Evergreen Valley College.

Challenge: Focus IT effort where it counts

Blach Construction is committed to providing exceptional customer service. As part of this approach, the company embraces innovation and new technology. The firm's Director of IT, Dominic Silvia, leads the IT team and plays a key role in Blach's adoption of new technologies.

One such technology is the firm's new ERP system with integrated project management functionality. The ERP system improves efficiency by fostering collaboration both inhouse and with suppliers and clients. "Continuous communication and up-to-date documentation are essential for a project to be both successful and profitable," says Silvia. "Blach's new ERP system will ensure that project teams are better equipped to provide the highest level of service to each other, trade partners and clients."

Another important IT effort, "our number-one priority," according to Silvia, is improving IT infrastructure on the firm's jobsites. The IT team focuses on improving all aspects of the infrastructure, including connectivity, reliability, hardware and data security, in order to provide equal access to its advanced digital tools. For example, at a jobsite equipped with sufficient IT, builders and clients can view complete, 3D models of the project, rather than using 2D drawings.

Despite a having small team of three, Silvia has been successful, providing support for the firm and its fluctuating 20 to 30 jobsites. In addition to the projects that directly support the firm's activities, Silvia and his team also encounter "usual" IT challenges. These include planning for disaster recovery, backing-up ever-expanding volumes of data and making decisions on where to host various services (cloud vs. data center vs. headquarters) within Blach Construction's rapidly evolving IT environment. "Riverbed Technology has helped my team achieve Blach's current infrastructure goals," Silvia says.

In Brief

Challenges

- Create a solution that empowers Blach's IT team to focus on activities that benefit the business
- Keep IT costs down
- Improve data security

Solution

- Riverbed SteelFusion Core and Edge branch converged infrastructure featuring BlockStream integrated storage delivery and Virtual Services Platform

Benefits

- Improved IT infrastructure at job sites allows better collaboration between builders and clients
- Critical data is housed in a secure data center and projected to offices via SteelFusion
- Data is secure and applications perform well in a hybrid IT environment
- Virtual Services Platform simplifies IT footprint and reduce hardware costs

Solution: SteelFusion cost-effectively secures remote site data, enhances disaster recovery strategy

Job-site data security, disaster recovery, data storage and the need to handle it cost-effectively, prompted the purchase of Riverbed® SteelFusion™. As Silvia explains, “We didn’t have the funds allocated to set up a separate site for disaster recovery, so we had to get creative and come up with a strategy that not only protected Blach, but one that was also cost-efficient.”

One of Silvia’s first security-related priorities was to migrate the main server infrastructure, which resided in the firm’s headquarters at the time, to a data center. With a SteelFusion Edge appliance deployed at the company’s headquarters and a Riverbed® SteelFusion Core appliance installed in the data center, Silvia centralized storage and management of the company’s servers.

As part of moving the infrastructure off-site, Silvia had to make sure that access to applications and data, which included the Tekla Building Information Modeling (BIM) system and models of virtual buildings, would be as good as it was when it was stored at the headquarters. SteelFusion’s BlockStream™ technology makes this possible, allowing primary data stored in the data center to be projected to the remote site.

After considering other options, including WAN optimization alone, as well as a global file system solution, it was clear that SteelFusion was the best approach. “There isn’t anything like SteelFusion—where you can actually run servers locally and have the storage projected locally—and have WAN optimization as well,” Silvia explained. “It doesn’t appear that there are other products in the marketplace that do what SteelFusion can do.”

Silvia fully utilizes the Riverbed Virtual Services Platform (VSP) on his SteelFusion Edge appliance, running a domain controller, print server, file share server, phone system voicemail server, the building alarm system server and a database server, for the firm’s estimating application. “I think I’m actually exceeding the recommended number of virtual machines on the appliance, but they are running fine,” Silvia noted.

Benefits: More time supporting the jobsites; More collaboration tools at the jobsites

The deployment of SteelFusion resolved Blach management's immediate concerns about the security of its data. "If somebody breaks into our office now and steals our equipment, our data is still at the data center and all we have to do is replace our SteelFusion Edge," says Silvia. And with SteelFusion, application performance in the headquarters is as good as it was previously when everything was on-site.

Silvia expects additional benefits from SteelFusion in the future, when a SteelFusion appliance may become part of the IT environment at job sites. "For projects that can support that expense, I can see a SteelFusion appliance tied into the BIM so that people could work with 3D building models at the job sites," he says. "SteelFusion would give the performance people need to build models and navigate through them, which isn't possible now because latency is too high."

Another important advantage of having SteelFusion at the job sites is that all of building data would remain safely in the data center.

Silvia sees Blach Construction's use of Riverbed technology as a competitive advantage. "Blach is an innovative company and I believe at the cutting edge of trends and technologies, not just the area of IT" Silvia says. "I appreciate that my company is willing to invest in SteelFusion, which is a fairly new technology, to keep us moving ahead."

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Summary

Blach Construction's three-person IT team supports a 185-person company and up to 40 jobsites during peak times. One of the IT team's goals is to improve the IT infrastructure at jobsites, but they must also provide solutions for the "usual" IT challenges, such as backing-up everexpanding volumes of data, planning for disaster recovery and making decisions about where to host various services (cloud vs. data center vs. headquarters), in the firm's rapidly changing IT environment. SteelFusion has resolved immediate concerns about the security of Blach's data, and is delivering excellent application performance over the network. The firm takes full advantage of VSP on the SteelFusion Edge appliances to simplify its IT footprint and reduce hardware costs. SteelFusion is poised to become a critical component of the job-site IT infrastructure where it will enable the use of the same advanced collaboration tools that are used in the company's headquarters.

About Riverbed

Riverbed, at more than \$1 billion in annual revenue, is the leader in application performance infrastructure, delivering the most complete platform for the hybrid enterprise to ensure applications perform as expected, data is always available when needed, and performance issues can be proactively detected and resolved before impacting business performance. Riverbed enables hybrid enterprises to transform application performance into a competitive advantage by maximizing employee productivity and leveraging IT to create new forms of operational agility. Riverbed's 26,000+ 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 bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters are a vibrant orange color. The 'i' in "river" has a small dot, and the 'd' in "bed" has a small tail. The overall appearance is clean and modern.