



## The evolution of an innovator

With the help of a close-knit partner, US Signal is expanding its renowned carrier-class network business and reaching for the clouds.

US Signal has always been a pacesetter when it comes to technology adoption and customer service. With 14,000 miles of long haul fiber and 1,200 miles of metro fiber, the carrier's optical network is one of the largest and most advanced in the Midwestern United States. In addition, its user support is unparalleled, with customer calls answered in 30 seconds or less by a highly qualified maintenance technician who immediately troubleshoots any issue.

"We are laser-focused on delivering the best quality network, the best operations center, and the best customer service in our region," says Dave Wisz, vice president of operations at US Signal. "That means staying ahead of the technology curve and finding new ways to support our customers."

The company was established in 2000 with the vision of becoming a full-service, fiber optic provider offering carrier-class service to carrier, wholesale, and retail customers. From 2004 to 2006, US Signal released a series of new products, including internet access, colocation services, and Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS), transforming the company into a premier provider of data networking services. In 2008, virtual Ethernet service was introduced, a comprehensive, monitored, layer 2 offering that could connect multiple customer locations across a WAN.

"US Signal is an innovator," says Don Sant, segment director for Cisco® Services. "They were one of the first carriers to offer 100 Gbps virtual Ethernet services, and they continue to push their capabilities forward on behalf of their customers."

If customer satisfaction is any indication, it's working. US Signal maintains industry-leading customer loyalty and retention year over year. According to Wisz, this type of success—amidst ongoing business evolution—can be attributed to the dependability and quality of the company's operations, from its services and customer support to its network and infrastructure technologies and the partners that help plan, build, and manage them.

"We've partnered closely with Cisco over the years in order to grow homogenously," says Wisz. "Our network and infrastructure are almost entirely made of Cisco gear, which, along with the close relationship we have with Cisco Services, delivers better stability and consistency—for us and our customers."

### A unique relationship

Randy Herlein, Senior Transport Engineer for US Signal, says the relationship his company has with Cisco is anything but ordinary.

"Cisco Services helps us do what we do every day," says Herlein. "I don't just consider them a partner; I consider them friends. It goes beyond the traditional business relationship. We're on the same team, and when we win, we win together."

Through Cisco Assurance Preemptive Services, US Signal has specialists monitoring its network around the clock. These specialists don't just wait for alerts or outages. They proactively analyze the network to identify and resolve problems before they occur, and to uncover possible optimization opportunities.



“Cisco often gives us the answer before we know there is a question,” says Herlein. “They tell us what’s about to happen—with our network and with forthcoming technologies—and we can adjust our development efforts and operations accordingly. It allows our engineers to be engineers instead of repair guys.”

These engineers, he adds, are busy working on US Signal’s latest business evolution: cloud hosting.

## Reaching for the clouds

With a rock solid network and computing infrastructure in place, US Signal is in the process of leveraging it in new ways. Tapping the expertise of its close-knit partner, the company is developing a range of cloud offerings that will complement its carrier-class network services.

“Extending our Cisco backbone and high-availability network to the cloud is a natural evolution of our business,” says Stephen Oyer, executive vice president of sales at US Signal. “This is a new area for our company, and we don’t have all the answers. So we’re relying heavily on Cisco’s cloud expertise, not only with the technology, but with go-to-market strategies and best practices.”

US Signal already offers Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS), and is developing cloud-based hosting and Disaster-Recovery-as-a-Service (DRaaS) capabilities. Company executives foresee application and managed service offerings thereafter.

“We have an opportunity to be a one-stop shop for network and compute services,” says Oyer. “Like everything else we do, we want these to be top-notch services that deliver exceptional value and reliability for our customers. Cisco continues to provide guidance and support as our business evolves.”

## Network assurance services

For a video and portfolio overview of Cisco Network Assurance services, visit: [www.ServicesPerspectives.com](http://www.ServicesPerspectives.com)



This article appears in the *Cisco Services Perspectives Magazine*, Spring/Summer 2013 edition. Download *Services Perspectives Magazine* at: [www.servicesperspectives.com](http://www.servicesperspectives.com).

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