

CASE STUDY: SOLVING MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE RESILIENCY

A prominent credit union with assets exceeding \$1 billion faced a pivotal challenge: to substantially reduce its operational budget to avert significant layoffs while addressing the Board of Directors' concerns about the potential impact of natural or man-made disasters in the Mid-Atlantic. The credit union was committed to ensuring uninterrupted service to its customers under any circumstances.

This case study details the strategic decision-making, implementation, and outcomes of the credit union's investment in an SD-WAN and Cisco Viptela project, led by Team 29B, aimed at modernizing its network infrastructure, reducing costs, and enhancing disaster recovery capabilities.

Challenge

The credit union faced a critical decision point: it needed to reduce its budget to avoid layoffs while maintaining service quality and disaster readiness. Recognizing the high costs and risks associated with existing MPLS circuits, the credit union sought to decrease its dependence on them due to their potential disruption of critical services to customers in the event of a disaster. The challenge was to find a robust, cost-effective solution that would:

- Ensure high availability and reliability of network services.
- Enhance disaster recovery capabilities to withstand any natural or man-made catastrophe
- Integrate seamlessly into their new Hybrid cloud infrastructure.

Implementation

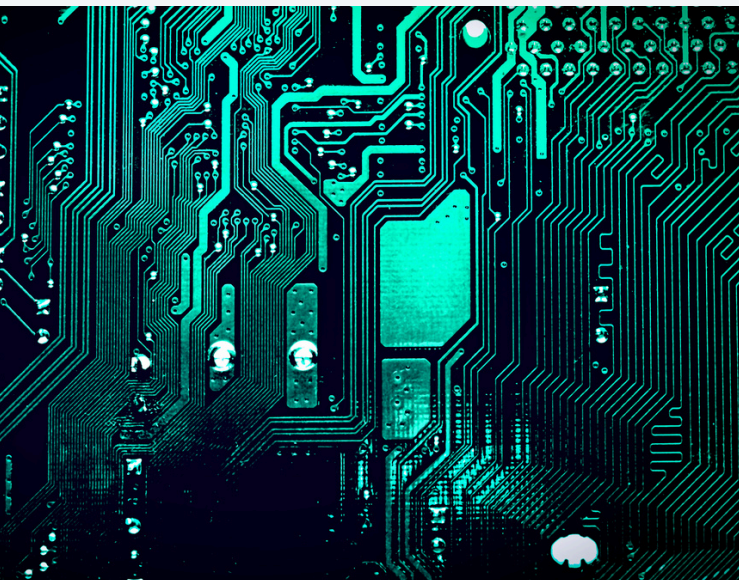
The project necessitated an initial investment in new circuits, Cisco SD-WAN equipment, and partner services, a strategic move intended to deliver long-term savings and operational efficiencies. The implementation focused on:

- **Network Upgrade:** Deployment of a high speed/low-cost broadband connection at each site to replace one of the expensive MPLS circuits.
- **Equipment Replacement:** Introduction of Cisco SD-WAN solutions across headquarters, disaster recovery sites, and branches to facilitate intelligent path control, application optimization, and improved security.

Solution

Team 29B proposed a comprehensive solution to replace an expensive MPLS circuit with a business-class internet circuit in the branches, modernize backup circuits at the headquarters and disaster recovery sites, and upgrade all aging network equipment with Cisco SD-WAN technology. This strategic overhaul aimed to achieve:

- **Cost Savings:** Leveraging the advanced capabilities of SD-WAN to reduce the need for expensive MPLS circuits, thereby saving the credit union an estimated \$900,000 over three years after the new circuits were installed and the Cisco gear was purchased.
- **Enhanced Reliability:** Implementing redundant carrier and path diverse circuits, ensuring continuous service availability to customers even in adverse conditions.
- **Disaster Preparedness:** Strengthening the credit union's infrastructure against potential disasters through a more resilient network architecture.



Outcomes

The strategic network transformation delivered remarkable results:

- **Immediate Cost Reduction:** The credit union saved \$100,000 in the first year following the SD-WAN implementation.
- **Substantial Ongoing Savings:** The client is on-track to enjoy savings of \$400,000 in the subsequent two years, aligning with the project's financial objectives.
- **Board Approval:** The CIO's presentation of the plan secured the Board of Directors' endorsement, recognizing the project's potential to mitigate disaster risks while preserving jobs.
- **Enhanced Disaster Recovery:** The modernized infrastructure significantly improved the credit union's resilience, ensuring customer services remain unaffected by natural or man-made disasters.



Conclusion

The credit union's strategic investment in an SD-WAN and Cisco Viptela project marked a pivotal step towards achieving operational excellence, financial efficiency, and enhanced disaster preparedness. By addressing the immediate challenge of budget constraints and the strategic imperative of disaster resilience, the credit union not only safeguarded its financial health but also reinforced its commitment to providing uninterrupted service to its customers. This case study exemplifies how strategic technological investments can transform challenges into opportunities for growth and resilience.